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TYPE-R

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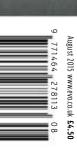
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by NICK TROTT

## **Ed Speak**

## IT'S A GREAT EVO TRADITION

to divulge the results of key first drives and group tests in the editorial leader, so with that in mind

I'd like to reveal that...

Just kidding. I can't add anything to the brilliantly written pieces this month so I'm going to talk about something off-topic for this issue, but on-topic in the world of cars: Formula 1.

I love F1. Always have. I drew my own

posters of Nigel Mansell in his Williams Honda and plastered them on my wall. I remember as an eight-year-old seeing the footage of Gilles Villeneuve's fatal accident and can still recall the horror and sadness. To this day, I wish I'd met Senna and done more than shaken Schumacher's hand. I have, however, spent a lot of time with many F1 drivers, and none has left me more impressed than Lewis Hamilton after the half-hour I had with him earlier this year.

I'll be honest, I wasn't a huge fan of Lewis before the interview. His driving yes, but I struggled with the #blessed #lovelife selfiebomb lifestyle and, as a bit of a purist, I thought he lacked the extraordinary dedication to everything racing that Fernando Alonso shows. All I can say to that is: My. Dumb. Ass.

Why? Lewis is one of us. Forget everything you think you know about him and read this (unedited) little chat I had with him.

## NT: Do you know evo?

Lewis: Yeah, man. I read it.

## Can I ask about your Zonda? Can we put it on the cover?

Yeah, thank you. You should. We took it out the other day. It's such a cool car.

## And you've got a manual?

Manual, yeah. It's funny, I drive a Formula 1 car with paddleshift stuff so you'd imagine I'm with that for a road car. But I like the old. I like blipping it on the way down and doing the heeland-toe.

## Did you forget how to do all that?

No. You never unlearn how to do that.

## And the sound?

It's ridiculous, the sound. We have to get the windows down and no radio on. Sometimes we just listen to the sound of my car. And Horacio is such a cool bloke. You know you're driving his car. He is just so good at the details. If you look at the detail of the car, it's pretty awesome, the way they do that.

## It's like jewellery.

Yeah, the carbonfibre, how it lines up.

## And you prefer the V12 to the V8?

The V12 is... It's always my favourite engine.

## 'Forget everything you think you know about Lewis and read this little chat'

## Does the new [turbocharged] F1 sound better this year?

It sounds the same. In the car, it sounds the same. Unfortunately it doesn't sound crazy like the old V10s. I remember my first time in a Formula 1 car, in '06 I think it was, in the V10 - 21,000rpm, it was frigging amazing. It just kept going. I was changing gear way too soon and it just keeps going on for much, much longer than you ever thought possible. When you're driving GP2 and the rpm is, like, 10,000 and stuff like that, [that V10] was huge.

What this transcript doesn't show is the joy and life in Lewis's eyes as he described his Zonda or that V10 'screamer'. Perhaps money and fame moves him into a zone of petrolheadedness that few understand, and broadcasting his celebrity via Instagram and Twitter may grate, but I have no doubt that if you got stuck in a lift with Lewis for a couple of hours, the time would fly by. You'd talk cars. You'd get on.



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Rare, affordable and with homologation pedigree

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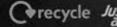
**Porsche Cayenne GTS** 



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Official fuel consumption figures for the all-new Audi RS 3 Sportback in mpg (l/100km) from: Urban 24.8 (11.4) – 25.2 (11.2), for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Optional wheels may affect emissions and fuel consumption



Extra Urban 43.5 (6.5) – 44.8 (6.3), Combined 34.0 (8.3) – 34.9 (8.1), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 194 – 189g/km. Standard EU test figures figures. Image for illustrative purposes only, includes optional extras.



Porsche recommends Mobil Ell and 1, August 22

Over 30,000 trophies would be in other hands. If we didn't believe in our ideas.

## **Mission: Future Sportscar**

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Concept versus

Lambo

Ambition **SENNA**  Tech



## **Elemental RP1**

by STUART GALLAGHER

HE CONCEPT OF A LIGHTWEIGHT, BRITISHdesigned and built track car is nothing new. In fact, the UK is a fervent breeding ground for such ventures. Some of them, such as Ariel, even get beyond the first wave of press announcements and show appearances and grow to become established players in their chosen field. Now Elemental wants to be the next success story with the car you can see here, the RP1.

A project that's been three years in the making, the

RP1 is the result of six engineers, designers and business specialists joining forces to produce a road-legal track car that owes its creation as much to F1 as it does to British ingenuity and endeavour. Yet the market for such cars is small, not to mention competitive, with a number of highly specialised manufacturers already successfully catering for most trackday participants' needs. Why, then, does Elemental think its RP1 is the track car you should go for?



At the core of the RP1 is an innovative carbon and aluminium tub. It uses an aluminium-composite 'sandwich' material for the floor and front and rear bulkheads. These are fixed to the car's central spine, side panels and dashboard, which are all carbonfibre. With each section secured and joined, the result is an incredibly stiff, strong and safe passenger cell.

The tub was designed in-house under the direction of composites expert Peter Kent, a former McLaren F1 employee, and technical director John Begley, who also moved from the Woking outfit having worked with its race team and automotive division on projects including the SLR, 12C and P1 hypercar.

It wouldn't have been possible for a company as young as Elemental to manufacturer the tub, which weighs just 60kg, had it not been for funding from the British government's Technology Strategy Board. Aluminium subframes connect directly to the tub, as do the front suspension and steering. The rear subframe supports a 280bhp Ford EcoBoost turbo in-line fourcylinder engine and Hewland six-speed sequential gearbox. The rear suspension double wishbones with inboard springs and dampers, as at the front - is then mounted onto the gearbox. The locking ratio of the limited-slip differential has yet to be finalised, but diff ramps will be adjustable.

The RP1's glassfibre body, designed by former Ford designer Guy Colborne, takes inspiration from GT cars and motorbikes, but the significance of the design lies in its aerodynamics. There's a front splitter/ diffuser that allows air to be channelled

66 The design of the glassfibre body takes inspiration from GT cars and motorcycles >>

under the car and out behind the front wheels, which permits some unique styling but also dramatically improves aero, most of which is working underneath the car rather than atop it. There's also a flat floor that runs almost the entire length of the car and ends in a large unhindered diffuser made possible by the exhaust exiting high up above the bumper. The front section of floor is covered with a sheet of wood, not only for practical reasons ('Wood is cheaper to replace than aluminium when it inevitably gets bashed on UK roads,' says Begley), but also because it allows more practical-minded owners to experiment with the aerodynamic effects of different shapes by taking a plane or file - or a saw to its outer edges.

Perhaps the most intriguing element of the RP1 is the seating position, which will be familiar to drivers of modern F1 cars. The seat is tilted back nearly 30 degrees, meaning the pedal box is higher than your hips. To look at it makes no sense, but slide in and it feels the most natural of driving positions. It's not a design gimmick, either, as it has allowed the flat floor at the front to be as large as possible, allowing the diffuser to work even more efficiently.



## WEIGHT



Elemental's impressively low target weight for the RP1

## **POWER-TO-WEIGHT**

The target power-toweight ratio



## REAR DIFFUSER

The RP1's rear diffuser in the car developing its target of 200kg of downforce at 100mph.

exiting above the rear carrying out its role.

Torque

Weight

On sale

0-60mph

Top speed

Basic price

3.1sec (est)

580kg (est)

£75,000 (est)

October 2015

## **TECH CLOSE-UP**

## **CARBON BODY**

glassfibre panels attached. The carbon





## **ENGINE**

Both 280bhp 2-litre EcoBoost engines will be offered. Both will use a six-speed gearbox (a range of



for the RP1. It offers

similar performance in

terms of engine power

and weight. Elemental,

however, expects to

offer the RP1 for a much

lower price than the BAC.

## IN DEPTH



## 1 AERODYNAMICS

The front diffuser and flat underfloor are key to the RP1 achieving high downforce. Elemental will also offer aero vanes and a larger front splitter for committed trackday users.

## BRAKES

Caparo will supply the brakes, which will include 380mm cast iron discs and four-piston calipers front and rear. ABS won't feature, but launch and traction controls will.

## WHEELS

A modest 17-inch wheel will be fitted at each corner and Michelin has been confirmed as the OE tyre supplier. A choice of road and track-specific rubber will be offered.



## TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

John Begley

as a race car to compete in the 750 Motor Club championship. It was never going to be a car we would build for the road. We didn't even plan to build more than two. We're all engineers with either a motorsport background or having worked with some of the world's biggest automotive manufacturers, but even after the opportunities our careers afforded us, we all knew we wanted to be part of a project we could call our own and have 100 per cent input in.

'From the outset our idea for the car was that it had to offer the very best on-track performance but without compromising useability on the road. The owner has to be able to drive the car to the track. If it's so extreme that

it needs to be trailered you might as well buy a race car. We have looked at how the RP1 is going to be used and how the customer is going to want to work on it. It's a hands-on car. The suspension is adjustable but access to all the adjustable components is open and designed to be carried out at the track with the resources available to you there. And the geometry adjustments are independent, too, so there's no need to get the guide string out for the toe if you adjust the camber.

'We want to create a forum for the cars too, with owners feeding back their experiences, suggestions and setup ideas so they can be shared with everyone. If any of those make significant improvements, we'll implement them on factory cars.'

## COCKPIT



## 🕦 DRIVING

Elemental says the RP1's driving position is unique for a road car and features a motorsport-inspired 'feet-up' driving position. The seat position is adjustable, as is the pedal box.

## DASHBOARD

The RPI's carbonfibre dashboard is a structural component of the car, linking the two side panels and the front firewall. A small wind deflector will be fitted to production cars.

## COMFORTS

As per the track-orientated brief, there will be precious few creature comforts on the RP1. Not even a heater, but it does offer 210 litres of luggage capacity for those weekends away at Le Mans.

## **PRODUCTION**

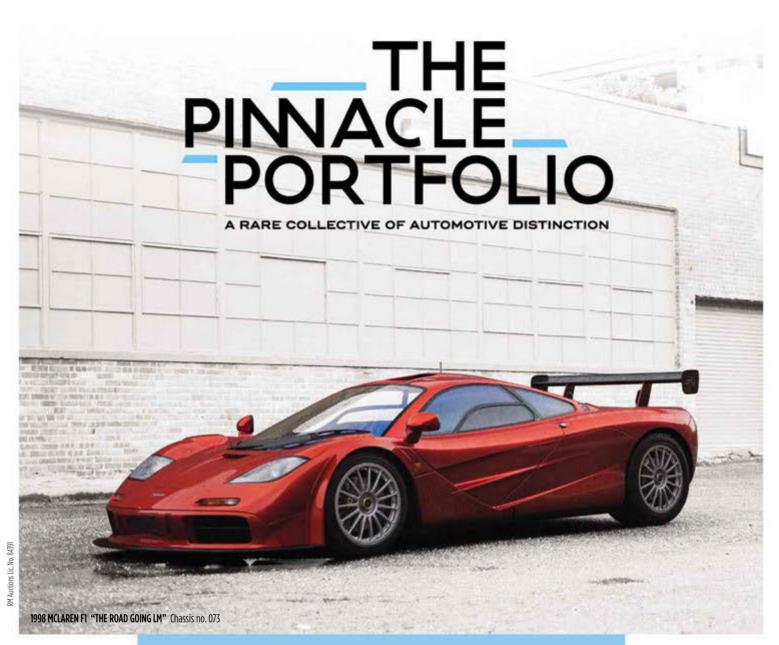


The number of RP1s Elemental wants to sell annually

## ONE TO WATCH

'It's easy to be cynical when presented with yet another low-volume British sport car manufacturer - we've been here before many times, after all. What makes Elemental different? The men behind the project left senior positions at leading automotive manufacturers and have put their own money into the project. Their innovation has also resulted in substantial backing from the government for the RP1's chassis tech, which could have many uses away from trackday cars, so their eggs aren't all in one niche basket.'

Stuart Gallagher



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## Will they build it?

Concept cars continue to play an important role in the automotive world, but their objective is shifting

## VW GTI CLUBSPORT

Developing 261bhp – and up to 287bhp with an overboost function – the GTI Clubsport will neatly fill the performance gap between the regular GTI and the all-wheel-drive Golf R. There's a new front bumper, deeper side sills, an aerodynamically honed roof spoiler and a rear diffuser. It's VW's Mégane RS Trophy.

## BMW 3.0 CSL HOMMAGE

Look past the exaggerated kidney grille and it's clear to see the original CSL's shark-nosed form in the Hommage. Dramatic wings curl over the bonnet in a manner that echoes, rather than replicates, the original's sharp-edged fenders, but the slim pillars and glasshouse are directly influenced by the classic.

N 1938, BUICK PRESENTED a vehicle called the Y-Job. Designed by Harley Earl, the artdeco Y-Job was notable in that it was a mere styling exercise, furnished with outlandish features never intended to make production. It was, in effect, the very first concept car.

Concept cars have since become an integral part of the automotive landscape, allowing manufacturers to preview new trends and showcase technological developments before they reach the roads. These concepts can, however, cause as much derision as they do excitement. Sometimes production models hit the street with only a passing resemblance to their conceptual cousins – smaller wheels, toned-down features, drab interiors far removed from those that rotated on motor show turntables.

Two recent concept cars that garnered significant attention were the BMW 3.0 CSL Hommage concept presented at Villa d'Este and the Volkswagen Golf GTI Clubsport from the Wörthersee festival in Austria.

The pair neatly demonstrate two different takes on the concept car.

The BMW is, as the name suggests, a tribute to the 3.0 CSL 'Batmobile' of 1972. While the styling evidences retrospective influence, the car's most outlandish features make use of BMW's existing technology. Carbonfibre, already seen on the i3 and i8 plug-in cars, is used throughout, the bonnet, boot and wings are aluminium, and the slim, intricate headlights resemble the laser units already used in the i8.

The Hommage previews no model in particular. BMW already has a wide range of two-door coupes in its line-up, from the futuristic i8 and brawny M4 to the original CSL's successor, the M6, so there's little real reason for this concept to exist, beyond celebrating the original and demonstrating the company's technical prowess.

The Volkswagen is very different. While BMW says elements of the Hommage *might* appear on future products, the GTI Clubsport is essentially a dressed-up production



car. The 261bhp concept features a production engine, bodywork from the existing Golf and a promise that the car will debut in 2016.

In previous years, VW Group brands have used Wörthersee to debut all manner of concept vehicles, though they have always been careful to incorporate some production relevance. Alongside the Clubsport at this year's show was the Golf GTE Sport. Lower and more dramatic than a regular Golf, and accessed via gullwing doors, the GTE Sport uses the TSI engine from VW's Polo R WRC, yet it also features a plug-in hybrid element and a nowcommonplace dual-clutch gearbox.

It used to be the that road cars were far removed from the concepts that originally spawned them, with long lead times between a vehicle appearing at a motor show and its production equivalent reaching dealerships. That made cars like the original Audi TT such a surprise – the 1998 production model differed little from the concept originally shown at the Frankfurt motor show in 1995.

More recently, with designs fixed so far in advance of production, similarities between concept cars and production models tend to be more pronounced. There was little surprise when the Alfa Romeo 4C hit the streets in 2013 looking identical to the 2011 concept, save for different headlights and door mirrors - its shape had been signed off long before the concept was revealed.

In reality, the role of the concept car has changed little since the 1930s. Like the Y-Job, which went on to influence Buicks in the following vears, modern concept cars still preview the look of models to come, as you can see from the small collection of examples on the right. However, extravagant styling exercises like BMW's CSL Hommage are becoming less common because production viability is now key. You're more likely to find a concept car boasting an advanced powertrain and the latest infotainment technology than heralding an alternative design.



## CONCEPT

## REALITY







Bentley Hunaudières/ Audi Rosemever

Bugatti Veyron

Little links the 1999 Bentley Hunaudières, 2000 Audi Rosemeyer (shown) and 2005 Bugatti Veyron visually, but all three share an 8-litre, W16 powerplant. Bugatti's design was already taking shape in 1999 with the Chiron concept, which had an even more extravagant W18 engine layout.





BMW M1 Hommage

BMW i8

Several cars influenced the look of BMW's striking plug-in hybrid, but the first glimpses were seen in the 2011 M1 Hommage. Designed to evoke memories of the original BMW supercar, several features - slim headlights, wing-like buttresses - eventually made their way to the production i8.





Porsche Panamera Sport Turismo

Porsche Panamera

The Panamera's styling isn't universally popular, but the Sport Turismo concept of 2012 was well received, Porsche using it to gauge reaction to a new design language. It heralded only detail changes for the production car's mid-life facelift in 2014, but its rear end can be seen on the Macan.





Mercedes-Benz F800

Mercedes-Benz CLS

Mercedes frequently uses concept cars to give an impression of future models, rather than previewing them directly. The F800, shown at Geneva in 2009, illustrates this well – its sweeps and proportions can be seen in the second-gen CLS, but the concept's forms are far more exaggerated.





Fiat Trepiùno

Fiat 500

The Trepiùno of 2004 is a perfect example of a concept making production unscathed. Save for minor details, the 2007 Fiat 500 was almost identical. It could however be said that the true concept for either car was the Nuova 500 of 1957, whose styling features inspired the retro throwback...

by STUART GALLAGHER

## TVR back from the grave

TVR's new owner enlists the services of Gordon Murray and Cosworth for the marque's first new model in a decade N 2017 WE WILL SEE THE return of one of the most iconic British sports car brands when the first Gordon Murray Design (GMD), Cosworth-powered TVR makes its debut.

It will be a remarkable turnaround for a marque that was only brought out of administration by its current owners in 2013.

Today's TVR is headed by Les Edgar, a software entrepreneur, Sagaris owner and a man who works on the principle that you should get the best people for the job, which is why the new car will be engineered by Gordon Murray – and built using his iStream manufacturing concept – and powered by a Cosworth-built V8.

Work on the new TVR has been underway for the last 12 months, with GMD finalising the car's tubular and composite chassis and aero requirements (this reborn TVR will be a ground effect car). Cosworth has had the dry-sumped V8 on the dyno since Christmas and by the end of June TVR will have its first test

mule on the road. An as yet unnamed design team is still working on the final look of the car. 'Gordon and his team have designed a chassis that's incredibly stiff and aerodynamically efficient, which is paramount to the car's dynamics,' says Edgar. 'The body is being designed to suit the chassis and dynamic requirements rather than trying to make the chassis fit the body.'

The chassis is not that far removed from those of TVRs of old, comprising an open tubular steel framework but with composite panels bonded on to provide the required stiffness. The chassis design is also versatile enough to allow TVR to roll out four new models in the next ten years.

Turning to Cosworth for its engine is another sign, says Edgar, that this TVR comeback is serious. 'We have a credibility gap to fill. To do this we need to work with the best in the industry, like GDM and Cosworth.'

At this stage engine details are thin on the ground, but the third-party block that will form the base of the unit will be built up to a specification unique to TVR to suit the car's intended performance. A manual gearbox will be the only option.

The timetable for TVR's resurrection looks horribly tight, but there has been work going on quietly behind the scenes since Edgar took over. A new factory has been designed and approved and its UK location is in the final decision stage. Negotiations have also been ongoing with existing TVR service centres to maintain cars old and new (17 are signed up so far). The first cars will be sold direct from the factory.

'We have to prove ourselves and provide a service people expect of a car at this price point,' says Edgar, tight-lipped on a price expected to be around £60,000. 'Our customers will be existing TVR owners, previous TVR owners, and we'll be fighting for the same pocket of cash that other sports car manufacturers are.'

For Les Edgar and his team, the hard work has only just begun. For TVR fans, the wait is nearly over.

## €2.5m Stratos dispute settled... for now



A High Court judge has delivered a verdict in the family dispute that saw Ernst Hrabalek and his son Christian contest ownership of a collection of Lancia Stratos road and race cars valued at €2.5m. The court ruled in favour of the father.

The two came to legal blows after



Christian claimed he was gifted the Lancias by his father and refused to return them when asked. Throughout the legal battle, Ernst Hrabalek claimed he had merely loaned his son the collection to help him launch his career in automotive design.

Following his graduation from



the Royal College of Art, Christian embarked on establishing himself in the automotive sector, primarily in design, a venture that started with him creating the Fenomenon concept car, a homage to the Stratos, for the 2005 Geneva motor show. To help cement the link, wherever Chris and



his concept went, so too did one of his father's genuine Stratos cars.

The contest for 'custody' has so far lasted four years, with three trials to date (the first two being in Austria and Germany), and is set to continue, as Chris Hrabalek intends to appeal the recent decision.



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The mog figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results (EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008), are provided for comparability purposes and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

ford.co.uk/fiesta



Go Further

by STUART GALLAGHER

## I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT...

MY KARTING TROPHY, 1982



Allan McNish
Three-time Le Mans
24 Hours winner,
WEC world champion

'It's a tiny trophy. It has a 3cm by 3cm marble base, with a plastic piece that looks a bit like a tower with two small wings attached, and then a little model kart sat on the top of that. In total it's probably just five inches high.

'It looks like something you might win at the fair, but it's what it symbolises. I've kept all of my trophies all the way through my career. Some of them are really tacky, but I keep them all because the race behind them and the story behind them is an important thing to me.

'That's what the trophy encapsulates in my mind. With this one it was the first win; the first time you've won something and then you know how to win, because you've done it. Before that you can only dream or think you know how, but the reality is you don't.

'It's like a little bit of a stamp in your mind. I was able to imprint the win – that was the template. It gave me self-confidence, it gave me a belief and it gave me a direction. It also made me realise that I was so bad at football but I was actually quite good at racing.'

**Hunter Skipworth** 



## Lamborghini SUV gets the go-ahead

Pugnacious Urus concept will form the basis of a rip-roaring SUV set to arrive in 2018

A M B O R G H I N I aficionados' worst fears have been confirmed with the news that Sant'Agata is to build an SUV. The Urus concept, first seen at the 2012 Beijing motor show, will go into production at the company's Italian base in 2018 after the current facility has been redeveloped to cover almost double its current 80,000 square metres.

The green light for production has required a commitment from both VW Group and Audi AG, as well as the Italian Ministry of Economic Development and a number of other regional government agencies.

When the new SUV arrives in Lamborghini showrooms in twoand-a-half years' time it will not only face internal competition from VW's luxury brand Bentley, which will likely be enjoying the early flushes of success with its Bentayga SUV, but from outside of the VW empire, too. The Urus should arrive in time to challenge Rolls-Royce's planned SUV.

While the company is secretive about technical specifications at this stage, it's unlikely the Huracán's manic V10 or the Aventador's devilish V12 will make an appearance in the Urus, rather the VW Group's engine department will be asked to up production of its turbocharged V8 engines and hybrid powertrains.

One thing's for sure, Lamborghini's second SUV will be more useable, efficient and socially acceptable than it's first, the LM002 of 1986.

## 150,000 sq metres

The size Lamborghini's Sant'Agata factory will increase by to build the Urus

## 500

New employees to build the LM002's modern successor.

## FOR SALE

The number of cars Lamborghini will build annually when Urus assembly is in full swing, doubling today's production tally

1475bhp

The power target for Croatian firm Rimac Automobili's electric Tajima Rimac E-Runner Concept\_One Pikes Peak challenger.

2:17.57

The unofficial lap record for production cars at Japan's Suzuka Grand Prix circuit, set by the 1341bhp Koenigsegg One:1.

**€**6,720,000

Erba auction for a 1952 Ferrari 212 Export.

£60,000,000

The value of classic Jaguar road and race cars that took part in the Coventry Motofest.

GT5

The trademark recently registered by Porsche. Hardcore Boxster, anyone?





Win in a McLaren GT car



Win the Formula F Championship



Win the Le Mans 24 Hours



Win a world championship with McLaren



Drive one of Avrton's McLaren F1 cars

PORTSCAR improving every year. It's very cool. The cars are getting better, the teams more professional and it's attracting even quicker and more competitive drivers. Motor racing fans are loving it because the racing is so tight.

'My first real taste of sportscar racing was in 2009 when I drove an Oreca 01 at Le Mans. That was a baptism of fire. That was before I'd raced in F1 and the most powerful cars I'd driven were in GP2. The whole 24-hour racing thing took me by surprise and I really had no idea what it was all about. Simple things such as not realising how long the day was [on the Saturday] before the race even got started. I didn't know how to pace myself, found it difficult to sleep and as a result was very tired. Driving at night wasn't so bad because the cars have really powerful headlamps, and although I really went in at the deep end driving an LMP1 when a GT car would have been a less full-on start to sportscar racing, at least in an LMP1 you are the one doing the overtaking so you don't have the issue of being blinded by faster cars passing you.

'I found that out when I drove the factory Aston Martin at Le Mans in 2013 and 2014. I'd love to win Le Mans. It's such an incredible event and such an experience. It's up there with the Nürburgring as a full-on racetrack-you're always at over 150mph. Also, Le Mans is special because I'm very interested in the history. Actually, not just Le Mans but all of the historical places in the sport. When we went to Monza I wandered around the banking one evening and soaked up the atmosphere.

'In 2013 I raced the McLaren MP4-12C GT3 at Spa in the 24-hour race. What a circuit. I'd never raced a GT3 car before and it was an equally mind-blowing experience. The car didn't have enough downforce and at the end of the race I was absolutely shattered. It's hard on the driver and hard on the car, too. Like at Monza, I had a look around Spa and drove around the old circuit in a road car. Those guys who raced there, in extremely fast cars that offered no protection... They were brave. Very brave. I guess they knew no better. If track safety and car safety hadn't improved, our generation would not still be racing.

'Signing for McLaren is obviously quite

## 66 Some P1 GTR owners have never driven on a track before – they're speechless after ">>

amazing for me. If you'd asked me when I was young what my ambition was, it would have been to one day drive for McLaren. Of course, what I meant back then was McLaren's F1 team. Well, that's not happened. But as you can imagine, my family has a very close bond with the company. I'd been to the technical centre in Woking before but until I joined the GT team I hadn't been to the old factory on Albert Drive. This is where the GT team is now based but it's also where my uncle Ayrton would have had meetings, where he would have seen his cars being built. And of course, it's where many of the old F1 cars [that McLaren has never sold] are stored. I'm working on them to wheel one out so that I can have a go.

'The new 650S GT3 is a completely different machine to the MP4-12C GT3 I drove at Spa. It's been developed substantially over the winter and now has far more downforce. Importantly, we've developed the car into a machine that's very close to what a gentleman driver will feel very happy with. However, I've missed a couple of races this year because they've clashed with Formula E rounds.

'On the subject of Formula E, naturally every professional racing driver wants to be a champion and this series is my best opportunity. In many ways it's a bit like old sportscar racing. It's like driving a conventional car with too small a petrol tank. You can't simply race the guy and pass him at all costs because he might be on a different strategy and you'll use your energy up and be in real trouble later in the race. Today, sportscar racing is more like a sprint race that happens to last 24 hours, but there are times when, like in Formula E, you have to conserve fuel and drive with your head.

'Back at McLaren we've got a brilliant team. We've got a guy called David Ryan running the show and he was very high up in the F1 team and, not surprisingly, is extremely professional and organised. I'm enjoying the whole experience, including working on the P1 GTR programme.

What a piece of technology. It's amazing how cars like this have developed in the last couple of years - just compare the P1 with what was being built ten years ago and the differences are amazing. Helping owners get to grips with their cars is really rewarding, too. Some have never driven on a track before and after I've given them a few hot laps in their cars they come out speechless. And when they've driven the car themselves, and have had some pointers on what to do, they climb out wearing massive grins.

'In modern sportscar racing, unlike F1, there is no one top team that dominates. My time in F1 was frustrating because coming into a team for only a year is a virtually impossible challenge. You need consistency and time to understand the car and build a relationship with the team. I'm so happy to be at McLaren GT where there is already a huge bond between the team and the Senna family.'

## A FAMILY TRAIT?

World sportscar racing is proving to be an arena where the frustrated racing fan, bored of F1's politics and dull racing, can go for therapy. Races are four times longer than a Grand Prix vet you can throw a sheet over the first three cars at the finish line. Those cars are also exciting, varied and bloody quick.

Bruno Senna couldn't have arrived at a better time. I never met his uncle, Ayrton, though know many who did. The late Russell Bulgin knew him well and had nothing but praise for him as a man. I can't judge how much influence Ayrton had on Bruno's personality, but I know one thing: if a professional racing driver is asked to telephone a journalist with two days' notice for an interview at 4pm and he calls at 3.55pm on that day (on his mobile from Moscow), then he is a cut above many of his peers. I suspect that Bruno's uncle had a similar humility and thoughtfulness. Colin Goodwin

edited by MICHAEL WHITELEY

## **FOCUS**

## FOUR-WHEEL STEERING

adaptive chassis control are all technologies that show how automotive engineers are still thinking of clever ways to enhance the performance of modern cars. Another technology that has recently joined that list is fourwheel steering (4WS).

Actually, make that *re*joined, as it's something of a comeback for 4WS. Honda's Prelude was the first production car to be fitted with such a system, way back in 1987, but since then there have been very few manufacturers that have considered 4WS worthwhile. However, recently it has started to make headlines again, most notably thanks to its inclusion on Porsche's 991-generation 911 Turbo, GT3 and GT3 RS, and the 918 Spyder.

Now Audi has implemented a similar system on its new Q7 SUV, and while it's not a hugely **evo** car, this could be the beginning of us seeing this technology filtering down to more affordable cars.

The optional four-wheel-steer system on the new Q7 is there to help with 'stability, agility and comfort', according to Audi, but how does it work? A typical 4WS system uses actuators on the rear wheels to modulate toe angles. Generally, for low-speed manoeuvres the wheels turn in the opposite direction to the

66 This could be the beginning of us seeing this technology filtering down to more affordable cars \*\*

fronts. This reduces the minimum radius of the turning circle for the car, and is said to improve the handling characteristics in slow-to-medium speed corners. When at higher speeds – such as during motorway driving – the rear wheels turn in the same direction as the fronts to improve stability.

For performance driving, turning the rear wheels in the opposite direction to the fronts is most useful, as the lateral forces on the rear tyres are reduced, helping to resist the onset of oversteer. However, the transition from grip to slip could be exacerbated, so sensors for yaw rate and steering angle can tell the ECU to straighten the rear wheels in certain scenarios.

Whereas Porsche's 4WS system is independent to each rear wheel, the Audi system (pictured) resembles a front steering rack installed on the rear axle, and thus links the two wheels. This has size and weight benefits compared to an independent system. Audi's system can also achieve angles almost double those of Porsche's – 5 degrees versus the 911's 2.8 – although due to packaging constraints and the transient response of the system (how long the actuators take to extend the toe arms), higher angles are not currently feasible.

After testing the system on tight, switchback alpine roads, we can confirm that the Audi system does have a tangible effect on turning performance. We had no problem threading the bulky Q7 through near-180-degree hairpins that smaller cars were having difficulties negotiating. This system could transform the characteristics of other models from Ingolstadt. Take the new TT, for example; a 4WS system could improve its handling to the extent that it could become a true drivers' car.



ASK MIKE
Your tech questions
answered

How long until driverless cars are commonplace? – Gary Driscoll

A while. Though the technology exists – Google's prototype cars (pictured) can even recognise the hand signals of cyclists – legislation will be complicated.

The 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic states that a car must be controlled by the driver. If not, who is to be liable in an accident – owner, manufacturer, software developer? And would such a car be programmed to avoid a crash with another car by yeering onto a busy pavement?

If the arrival of autonomous cars is hindered, it won't be by tech, but ethics and legislation.

## Send your question to experts@evo.co.uk



## **TECH GAME-CHANGERS**

HYBRIDISATION

First productionised by: Toyota When: 1997



Hybrid cars once suffered the stigma of being suitable only for treehugging anoraks solely interested in increased fuel economy and low carbon emissions.

However, we are now seeing more and more manufacturers

using hybridisation to increase performance.

There are two main types of petrol-electric hybridisation: parallel and series.

The former mechanically combines an internal combustion engine (ICE) and an electric motor. This is the method you will find in cars such as the McLaren P1.

Series hybrid cars use solely the electric motor for propulsion and the ICE as a generator, topping up battery power when required. This configuration

is found in cars such as the BMW i3 'range extender'.

Series hybrids can make better gains in terms of efficiency as the ICE is decoupled from road speed, thus operating with minimum brake specific fuel consumption.

Parallel hybrids, however, are better suited to performance, as torque from the electric motor is added to that of the ICE. Features such as negative torque application can also mean that NVH can be minimised during gearshifts.





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The New Aberth 595 Competizione range starts from £19,890 OTR. Model shown is an Aberth 595 Competizione 1.4T-Jet 180 hp at £22,110 OTR with Cordole Red Tri-Coat Metallic Paint at £660, 17" Formula – Matt Black Finish Alloy Wheels at £190, Black Stripe and Door Mirrors at £170 & Abarth Corsa Front Seats by Sabelt in Learher/Abarthan at £1200.

edited by SAM SHEEHAN

## **FOCUS**

## LOW-PROFILE FUTURE FOR SINGLE-SEATERS

EVERAL OF THE WORLD'S premiere single-seater championships look set to increase wheel diameters in a bid to make the tyres used for racing more relevant to road cars. Currently, toptier championships such as F1, GP2 and Formula Renault all run 13-inch wheels, but tyre suppliers believe that using 17 or 18-inch wheels will help their technology transition more effectively into road tyres.

The world's foremost electric racing car championship, Formula E, has bravely set a precedent in this respect.

'From the very start the idea was to have maximum links between our cars and the street tyres of the future,' explains Serge Grisin, Michelin's Formula E project manager. 'So what we learn in racing is much easier to transfer to a street tyre because of the championship's similarities.'

Grisin adds that the process of transferring innovation from motorsport to the road is also made quicker, with the new technology fast-tracked into production. 'What we are learning now we can use in the next generation of street tyres.'

It looks like both classes of Formula Renault – FR 3.5 and FR 2.0 – will soon follow suit, as the series has been testing Michelin tyres on 17 and 18-inch wheels. The popular perception is that lower profile rubber helps make handling more precise. GP2 also ran a demonstration car on 18-inch wheels at the 2015 Monaco Grand Prix, and later confirmed that the new Pirelli tyres used on the car were 'ready to race'.

Even so, Formula E tyres will likely be the most relevant to road cars because, unlike races in other classes, the cars can only run treaded tyres and compete on street circuits.

'The tyres have to race on painted surfaces and over manholes in temperatures ranging from five to 50 degrees; it's the same for street tyres,' continues Grisin. 'So during a race we're in a context where the way the tyre is working is very similar to a normal road tyre. We can use Formula E as a laboratory.'



## **TYRE NEWS ROUND-UP**

Many of the tyre industry's headlines have recently been dominated by motorsport. By the time you read this, the Le Mans 24 Hours race will have been and gone, but for some it was the Nürburgring 24 Hours in May that was of greatest importance.

'We learn [fastest] about compounds and construction in

the harsh race environment [of the Nürburgring],' Steffi Olbertz, motorsports manager at Falken Tyre Europe explains. 'This is a way to accelerate our testing and try new things in the toughest place.'

Away from the race track, Kumho previewed an intelligent new tyre concept. The Maxplo features movable

tread blocks that can adapt to suit all weather and road conditions, and it can even alter its contact patch for better traction and braking.

The South Korean tyremaker also announced it will strengthen ties with Japan's Yokohama, sharing research and development expertise to codevelop the next generation of tyres.



## SUSTAINABILITY

Burning rubber could be about to get a whole lot more sustainable with Goodyear and Michelin investing heavily in new initiatives. We covered Goodyear's use of rice husk ash to produce silica in evo 207, but now the company has gone one step further to optimise production processes and reduce resulting emissions.

'Our customers are demanding more fuel-efficient tyres but they want us to minimise the typical tradeoffs,' David Zanzig, Goodyear's director of global materials science, explains. 'Our materials scientists worked in cross-functional teams and, together with tyre design and construction engineers, they derived an integrated solution that optimises performance.' Goodyear says this modified material is easier to mix into compounds, reducing the energy intensity of the tyre production process.

Michelin is also working to reduce its global footprint by investing in a joint-venture reforestation project in Indonesia with Barito Pacific Group. The French tyre maker will inject c£36million into the project, which will see rubber trees planted across 88,000 hectares of land. These areas have recently been devastated by rapid rates of deforestation.

Roughly 80,000 tons of rubber will be produced each year by these new forests.

While production processes get greener, until tyres become completely recyclable it's impossible to claim that they're sustainable. These recent initiatives are certainly moving things in the right direction.

Maybe one day even evo-esque driving will be sustainable...

For more info, visit evo.co.uk/tyres





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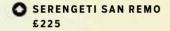
You'd expect sunglasses created in Hawaii to be effective, and Maui Jim's classic-style shades certainly put you in the mood for a sunny drive. evo subeditor Richard Lane swears by his, praising the way the polarised lenses cut glare and offer 'superb clarity' even when it's overcast. The broad frames also offer good coverage – smaller frames can let too much light leak through. Several lens colours are available, from contrastenhancing grey to easy-on-the-eye brown, with various frame finishes

mauijim.com



as 1936, when they were used by the pilots that inspired the frames' moniker. The company offers a bewildering choice of designs and lens options, though it hasn't eschewed technology - carbonfibre and titanium frames and polarising lenses all feature. Both staff photographer Aston Parrott and production editor Ian Eveleigh are pleased with theirs; Parrott praises Ray-Ban's customisation options - his Clubmasters sport tortoiseshell frames with titanium rims and green lenses.

ray-ban.com/uk



SERENGETI BRERA SANDED BLACK

Two technological facets tend to define sunglasses – the construction of the frames and the properties of the lenses. Serengeti offers two types of lenses – glass and its more resilient 'Polar PhD'. Both are aimed at drivers and use photochromic polarising technology for reduced eye fatigue - a technology the company pioneered. Light weight is important too, and the Brera shades featured here use copper-beryllium alloy frames (used in aerospace, precision tools and even weaponry), while the San Remo uses a titanium construction. Carbonfibre is also available.

serengeti-europe.co.uk



SUNWISE NECTAR BLACK £18.99

> Oxford-based Sunwise takes inspiration from sports and outdoors activities, and even sponsors several up-andcoming motorsports stars. Several lens options are available to cut UV light and fogging, while 'Polafusion' technology reduces glare. The firm does an entire range of motorsport and motorcyclinginspired designs. These Nectar shades are part of the range, with flat arms that the company says are ideal for wearing under a cap or helmet. They're also refreshingly affordable.

shop.sunwise.co.uk





edited by ANTONY INGRAM

## HANDS-ON

## TESLA MODEL S INFOTAINMENT SCREEN

That's the question most people ask of the 17-inch touchscreen that occupies a vast swathe of real estate on the dashboard of the Tesla Model S P85D.

View the screen in photographs, where inevitably the brightness has been maximised for illustrative effect, and people imagine the output is akin to a console-mounted searchlight. Off-putting during the day, positively blinding at night.

The reality is rather obvious. Not only can the screen be dimmed during the daytime, but it automatically dims as ambient light fades. It's always on, so to an extent there'll always be a glow in your periphery, but it's no more a bugbear than the screens in most equivalent luxury vehicles.

And its myriad functions are more than welcome in nose-to-tail Birmingham traffic, which is the setting for our first brief UK drive of the new dual-motor Tesla. As an escape from the tedium of crawling queues the screen is quite appealing, and a permanent 3G internet connection means entertainment is just a few prods of the screen away.

The benefits of a full 17 inches of navigation screen can't be understated either. Picking routes on the fly couldn't be easier, and a recent software update allows you to choose a location by simply touching the screen, which is easier, quicker and safer than dedicating attention to

entering postcodes. You can do that too if necessary, though, with a full touchscreen keyboard.

Operating the car's heating controls is equally simple – they are permanently positioned at the bottom of the screen, so finding them isn't difficult and one can anchor one's thumb along the bottom of the screen to avoid the normal touchscreen pitfall of a misplaced prod.

Perhaps most intriguing is that extra functions can appear overnight. Tesla owners are already used to turning on the car in the morning to find a software update has been installed. The most recent update added automatic emergency braking, blind-spot warning (the hardware was already on the car) and an improved trip planner that routes via Supercharger fast-charge stations.

There's also a Valet Mode, which

Extrafunctionscan appearovernight

limits speed and acceleration, hides personal addresses in the satnav and locks the glovebox and bonnet.

Yet buried within the menus, there's one small slider that will make you forget about every other function. That slider chooses between 'Sport' and 'Insane' modes. Choose the latter and the P85D's full 691bhp output is unleashed along with a McLaren F1-matching 3.2sec 0-60mph time. Now that's distracting.





## **ASK ANTONY**

## Time for a drive. Keys or controller?

2015 looks like being a great year for racing videogame fans. Two new rally titles are making their debuts - Dirt Rally and Sébastien Loeb Rally Evo - as well as a new official F1 title and a new Forza game. Project Cars has just hit the shelves and for fans of two wheels there's Ride - a game described as 'Forza meets motorcycles'. Whether you enjoy these evermore-realistic racing titles seems to depend on whether you see gaming as escapism from real driving or a substitute for it. If you're too young to drive then there's little choice. but the pursuit of realistic physics arguably takes the 'game' element out of gaming. Recently, I've spent a lot of time playing Dirt Rally, Codemasters' successor to the Colin McRae Rally series. It's great, and the first rally game I've truly enjoyed since the first McRae title in 1998. The original's enduring appeal is, I think, because it still feels like a game. It's still simple, uncomplicated fun. Great as modern, realistic titles are. they're chasing something they can never really achieve - the genuine Thrill of Driving. What's your take? Email me at antonyi@evo.co.uk, or tweet me @evoAntonv.

## WATCH



## McLAREN F1 DETAILS

• McLaren F1 details

Henry Catchpole

explores the F1's lesserknown attributes



## ARIEL NOMAD

Q evo Ariel Nomad
The Ariel Nomad
is like no other car
we've driven, as Henry
Catchpole discovered



## PORSCHE 911 GT3 RS

Q evo GT3 RS

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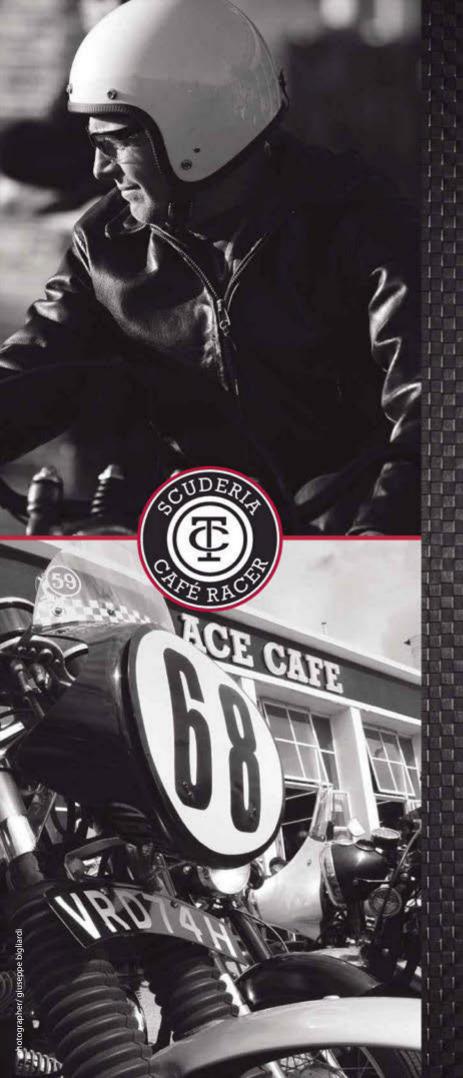
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edited by SIMON DE BURTON

## **WATCH TECH**

Bulgari Diagono Magnesium 'Wrist Vault'



One of the biggest technological surprises to emerge from this year's **Baselworld watch** show was Bulgari's counter to the smartwatch in the form of its 'Wrist Vault' concept.

Based around the new, magnesiumcased Diagono model. the Wrist Vault has heen developed with Swiss secure digital storage specialist WISeKey. It uses a cryptographic chip and an invisible antenna inside the watch's case to transmit a digital certificate to the owner's smartphone. This unlocks the 'Bulgari Vault' app on the phone, allowing access to the owner's data, which itself is securely stored on a 'cloud' inside a Swiss military bunker.

The certificate is transmitted from the watch to the phone using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, which is more secure than Bluetooth because it only works when the two devices are very close together.

The idea is that the watch and app could be used for anything and everything, from making secure payments to remotely unlocking car doors.



## THIS MONTH

## **TAG Heuer** Formula 1 McLaren

From: tagheuer.com Price: £1200

If you've ever wondered where the 'TAG' bit of TAG Heuer came from, you'll need to look back three decades to the purchase of Heuer by Techniques Avant Garde. Mansour Ojjeh, the son of TAG founder Akram Ojjeh, was also a McLaren shareholder, and the TAG Heuer/McLaren partnership has been going strong ever since, making it the longest collaboration between a Formula 1 constructor and a watch brand. This new Formula 1 watch marks the 30th anniversary and will be available from July in a numbered edition of 5000 examples.

## **Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Concept Laptimer** Michael Schumacher

From: audemarspiguet.com Price: SFr 210,000

Although Michael Schumacher has been out of the public eye for 18 months, Audemars Piguet has - with the backing of his family - continued to develop this watch, which the F1 legend instigated more than five years ago. A horological first it features a mechanical chronograph movement with two central hands that can be stopped, started and reset independently to allow consecutive timing of individual laps. The watch has a 44mm forged carbon case with titanium and pink gold detailing.

## CT Scuderia **Street Racer**

From: classic-time.co.uk Price: £845

Enrico Margaritelli is a third-generation watchmaker who also enjoyed a 12-year career as a motorcycle racer - a life that inspired him to create his bike-themed CT (for 'contatempo', or 'time counter') Scuderia watch range. This watch with a 'tricolore' dial made from enamelled carbonfibre is the latest addition to the Street Racer line and features the firm's distinctive, top-mounted pushpieces and crown, a 44mm steel case and a canvas-covered leather strap. A quartz movement keeps the price down - but it's still a decent. Swiss-made Ronda one.





'My first watch was a giveaway with the Champion spark plugs logo on the dial, and I wore it all the time as a boy. It made me a fan of chronographs and, because we have a

## PATEK PHILIPPE **REFERENCE 3970P**

As worn by Paul Stewart

strong association with Rolex through my father Jackie's role as a brand ambassador. I've owned various Cosmograph Davtonas.

'But in around 2002 I was looking in the Patek Philippe store in Geneva and saw a Reference 3970P, the "P" standing for "platinum". It looked just like my old Champion, only properly made - and that's what made me buy it.

'I wear it all the time. and am not precious about it. It looks well used, but whenever I look at it I'm in awe of the craftsmanship that goes into making these things.







HE WEEKEND OF JUNE 27 and 28 will be super-busy for the Michelin team as they contribute to the excitement of two fantastic motorsport events: the Formula E London ePrix being held in the centre of the capital, and for which Michelin is the official tyre supplier, and the Goodwood Festival of Speed, where the company is hosting the crowd-pleasing Michelin Supercar Paddock and Supercar Run.

Each of these events is a paradise for **evo** readers, but which one should you go to? Simple: both! The racing in Formula E is thrillingly close and quick, while the Michelin Supercar Paddock at the Goodwood Festival of Speed is the stage for three UK debuts from Koenigsegg, Aston Martin and Danish newcomer Zenvo. You'll not want to miss out on any of it...

The London ePrix is a double-header held across the Saturday and Sunday and is the finale of a thrilling Formula E series that has seen the stunningly quick all-electric single-seaters race through the streets of cities in China, Malaysia,

North and South America, and Europe. The London races are being held on a 1.81-mile track mainly comprising the perimeter roads of Battersea Park, right next to the River Thames and with many of London's famous landmarks creating an evocative backdrop to the racing.

As official tyre supplier, Michelin's engineers and technicians will be out in force at Battersea Park, tending to a 20-strong field of identical Spark-Renault SRT\_01E single-seaters. Michelin has specifically designed the Pilot Sport EV for the championship; it's a treaded ultra-high-performance tyre incorporating technologies from both Michelin's road-tyre range and its motorsport rubber. And it's a vivid example of how Michelin's motor racing activities enhance the performance of the tyres that you drive on every day.

Formula E proves that sustainable motorsport is a reality, as the London ePrix will reinforce in thrilling fashion. Take public transport to get there – quite apart from it suiting the spirit of the occasion, it removes the headache of finding a convenient parking space. While there's no

## 'EACH EVENT IS A PARADISE FOR EVO READERS. WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU GO TO? BOTH!'





nearby Tube station, there are overground stations at Battersea Park and Queenstown Road, and a number of buses service the area – visit www.tfl.gov.uk for details.

Saturday's London ePrix main race starts at 4pm and there are practice and qualifying sessions throughout the day – the full programme of events and the online ticket booking service can be found at www.fiaformulae.com/london.

Day one of your unmissable weekend of British motorsport completed, it's time to nip down to the Goodwood Festival of Speed for Sunday's fun. You need to buy tickets in advance – get along to www.grrc.goodwood.com in a hurry if you haven't already done so, and check out options for parking, grandstand seats and hospitality packages. And while you're on the site, download a map; there's a lot to see and do at the Festival of Speed, so it's good to know where to find it all.

In the morning, get up early to beat the queues – the car parks are open from 6.30am and there's breakfast cooking around the grounds. And if you're travelling south to Goodwood having watched the London ePrix, look at your map and pick a route that takes you off the main

roads through to Petworth, and then southwest on the A285 to Goodwood House: there are some truly enjoyable roads along the way.

The theme for this year's Goodwood Festival of Speed is 'Flat-out and Fearless: Racing on the Edge', and the line-up in Michelin's must-see Supercar Paddock is the perfect complement to that theme. The Supercar Paddock is hosting three UK debuts – the mighty Koenigsegg Regera megacar, the brutal and wonderful Aston Martin Vantage GT12, and wild supercar newcomer, the Danish-designed Zenvo ST1, complete with supercharged and turbocharged 6.8-litre V8 engine. Michelin's stand will also feature the Noble M600 Speedster, Alpina XD3 and a Williams FW25 Formula 1 race car, along with many other pulse-raising performance cars.

Sunday is also the day of the Michelin Supercar Run, where the assembled icons charge up the famous hill climb course in a bid to set the fastest time. It's another high-octane demonstration of how Michelin uses more than a century's worth of motorsport experience to create outstanding road tyres for your car.

Follow the conversation using #MichelinFOS

Opposite page: Formula E cars will be racing on the streets of London wearing Michelin Pilot Sport EV tyres. This page, from top: Goodwood will play host to countless Michelinshod models, including the likes of the Peugeot 205 T16, Porsche 918 Spyder and Mercedes SLS Black Series

## A WIN-WIN SITUATION

The Michelin Supercar Paddock at the Goodwood Festival of Speed will be crammed with iconic cars from legendary manufacturers. Michelin works in close collaboration with many of these car makers to create ultra-high-performance tyres that maximise the performance of **evo** readers' dream machines

The extreme ability of tyres such as the Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 and the Pilot Super Sport are a direct result of highly successful long-term motorsport programmes that deliver technologies from which we can all benefit – just like Ferrari, Porsche, AMG, Koenigsegg, Lotus and Aston Martin.





I DON'T REALLY subscribe to the theory that Lamborghini is somehow 'going soft', but I'd love to see and hear the reaction of somebody who does when confronted with an Aventador LP750-4 Superveloce.

Forget the numbers for a second and just take in the extraordinary sight of the SV. A huge great wedge of carbonfibre and aluminium riddled

with intakes and aero devices, nose shovelling into the ground, rear wing flying high. It's ridiculous, heroically brazen and joyously *Lamborghini*. If this is the ultimate representation of the marque in 2015 then Audi's stewardship of everyone's favourite (former) basket case is impeccable.

Of course, in the good old days there was always the suspicion that, for Lamborghini, that gleeful effect when casting eyes over the SV would have been enough. Job done.

Not anymore. The SV might have all the knee-trembling shock value of the days of yore, but now there's a determination for more substance. Evidence of that comes in the form of that lap of the Nürburgring – 6min 59sec of fury, grip, hair-raising performance and toe-curling commitment. Clearly the SV is more than just a load of crazy bits of carbon chucked at an Aventador.

So how the hell did the Aventador SV get around the Ring in under seven minutes when the standard car – just 50bhp shy of the SV's full 740bhp at 8400rpm and a mighty machine in its own right, remember – is some 25 seconds behind? The answer lies in that wing, the jutting front splitter, the reprofiled underbody and a whole host of other fundamental changes. Yes, the 6.5-litre V12 is fiercer than ever and



# now revs to 8500rpm (rather than 8250rpm) before the limiter cuts in, but that's almost by-the-by. It's the aero, the new magnetorheological dampers, the small weight savings and simply a much more aggressive setup that really elevates the SV into uncharted territory for Lamborghini. For the record, it's not too shabby in a straight line either, hitting 62mph in 2.8sec, 124mph in 8.6sec, 186mph in 24.0sec and over 217mph flat-out.

Lamborghini is keen to talk aero. The huge wing has three settings and can be adjusted manually, changing the total downforce and the aero balance. Run it relatively flat ('basso' in evocative Lamborghini vernacular) and you'll benefit from 186kg of downforce at 174mph. In the 'medio' setting that increases to 202kg and in full parachute mode ('alto') the SV has 218kg of downforce. In fact, 'parachute' does

Above: in the modern tradition of Superveloce Lamborghinis, the latest Aventador sports marked aerodynamic additions to its bodywork – these are partially responsible for a Nürburgring lap time within touching distance of that of the Porsche 918 Spyder

# This month

# LAMBORGHINI AVENTADOR LP750-4 SUPERVELOCE

SV Aventador arrives with an extra 50bhp, new aero and a revised chassis



# FORD MUSTANG 5.0 V8 GT

The 415bhp pony car lands in Europe. Still want that lightly used M3?



# ALFA ROMEO 4C SPIDER

Does the open version of Alfa's pretty sports car improve on the coupe?



# JAGUAR F-TYPE S COUPE MANUAL

V6-engined F-types get new option of a manual gearbox. But is it a good one?



# BMW M6 COMPETITION PACKAGE

Facelifted M-car gains 592bhp option with a sub-4sec 0-62mph time



# PORSCHE CAYENNE GTS

Latest GTS swaps V8 for twin-turbo V6
– but with more power, of course



# The team

With the Aventador SV our lead Driven this month, we asked the **evo** road test team to recall the first Lamborghini they drove:



# **NICK TROTT**

Editor





### STUART GALLAGHER Managing editor

'A Diablo for the dummy issue of **evo**. It was our first photoshoot and the most petrifying 20-metre drive of my life'



# HENRY CATCHPOLE

Features editor

'A bright yellow Gallardo. I was quite intimidated. Mostly because John Barker was in the passenger seat'



# DAN PROSSER

Road test editor

'A white Gallardo coupe. Looked good, but the e-gear transmission was so bad I thought it was broken'



# JETHRO BOVINGDON

Contributing editor

'Murciélago. Couldn't believe how much metal was behind the seats. Intimidating? Absolutely. But what an engine'



# RICHARD MEADEN

Contributing editor

'Diablo Roadster in Sant'Agata. Made all the more memorable by Valentino Balboni collecting me from the airport!'



# **DAVID VIVIAN**Contributing editor

'The Jalpa I road tested for *Motor*. Weirdly angular styling, not that fast but great V8 singing voice'



'The drivetrain still has a demonic, sometimes brutal feel, but the chassis is where the real changes lie' the car a disservice – it can achieve its electronically limited top speed ('217mph plus a little tolerance') even when the rear wing is at its steepest angle. Which is pretty cool.

Even on the Circuit de Catalunya it won't be easy to feel the benefit of those forces. Chief of R&D, Maurizio Reggiani, says stability and grip is improved from around 85mph, but anyone who tells you they can feel the effects of downforce in a road car – short of in something like the Radical RXC – is probably bending the truth. Of more interest to us are the new magnetic dampers, the more aggressive four-wheel-drive setup and the Lamborghini Dynamic Steer. The last of those is a standard

feature on the SV and the benefits – greater reaction for less steering angle – are said to now be backed up with genuine consistency and a feel for what the tyres are up to. It still seems an odd concept to make your main point of contact with the car vary according to speed and load, but it's always best to go into these things with an open mind. Reggiani understands previous criticisms and says that the system has been finely honed over many iterations to get it right for the SV.

First things first. This huge car feels inordinately exciting from the moment you wrench up the door, reverse-fall into the seat and then reach up and pull on the orange loop

of leather that passes for a door handle. Inside there's carbonfibre everywhere, which contributes to an overall weight saving of 50kg, but it's really the architecture of Aventador that lends real drama. You sit bolt upright (although the fixed-back seats can be tilted back on their mounts), the windscreen rushes up to meet your forehead and everywhere you look is alien and outrageous, be it through the black slats in the rear-view mirror or the garish TFT display in bright yellow with a rev indicator sweeping in a vast arc up to a bright red '10'. And of course there's that little red flap that needs to be flicked up to use the 'Engine Start' button.

# Lamborghini Aventador SV









Much the same could be said for the standard car. The bare carbon door mouldings, Alcantara-trimmed steering wheel, lightweight 'carbon skin' leather and those hard, upright and pretty uncomfortable seats add something to the SV cocktail, but they aren't transformative. However, it takes about two corners to realise that, in becoming the SV, the big Aventador has been transformed.

There are familiar characteristics, of course. That braying, gnashing, triumphant engine is just more of the same – even sharper, even more responsive at low and medium revs, even more terrifying when you find the room and the bravery to wring it out and, of course, even louder. The

seven-speed ISR gearbox isn't much changed, either. In Strada mode it's just about passable as an auto, in Sport the shifts feel slow and slurred and in Corsa they thump home with savage intensity. Get the big TFT display flashing for an upshift and they hit clean and incredibly fast. It's just a shame you can't have that polish at any point in the rev range.

So the drivetrain still has a demonic, sometimes brutal feel, but the chassis is where the real changes lie. It would be easy to talk about the Dynamic Steering, four-wheel-drive system and aerodynamics separately, but it's pretty clear that each is inextricably linked with the next. Reggiani

explains that the downforce could have made the SV feel too stable, 'like glue', as he puts it, and actually rather inert. The numbers Lamborghini achieved necessitated and allowed a more agile, reactive balance. The Dynamic Steering, too, sparked a rethink, as it created extremely positive turn-in response and needed to be supported by a super-alert and stable front end.

That all adds up to new precision and adjustability, and a sense that you can lean on the car without its composure washing away. The Dynamic Steering works very well, offering intuitive turn-in response and a weightiness that imparts a sense of the tyres pushing back.

Top right: Bovingdon still has issues with the SV's seats, but the cabin is just as dramatic as the carbonfibre and aluminium bodywork. Above: this frame captures the splitsecond the SV's rear wheels spin up and oversteer begins - time for opposite lock!



The SV does have just a little turn-in understeer in extremis, but it's so easily negated with a little lift of the throttle that it never gets in the way. In fact, just like in a 911, it's the SV's opening gambit and a signal that you're about to be let in on the fun. Work the accelerator gently and the SV shows beautiful balance and, as the corner unfolds, it shifts around in phases. First there's the gentle push, a lift tightens the line and then it stays neutral through the heart of the corner before exiting with the rear tyres edging into wheelspin and creating a wicked lick of oversteer. It's certainly not wildly expressive in the manner of an F12, but the SV is anything but one-dimensional. And because it produces such extreme forces, the rewards when you do get the chassis balanced under power are exaggerated until you're fit to burst.

It takes some time to get confident in the SV because it's so big, so fast and seems almost nervous in those opening forays – every lift threatening to unleash a load of momentum that you can't contain. But despite the cautious ESC (which makes you feel it's hiding nasty secrets and ramps up the intimidation), the SV shows real tolerance of the daftest behaviour on Catalunya's wide surface. In fact, it's huge fun – at times life-affirming, at times terrifying but always completely immersive. There's more dynamic excitement and depth of ability than before.

And the promised benefits in ride comfort and wheel control from the magnetic dampers? It still feels very stiff but we'll have to wait for a road drive to comment. One thing is clear: the SV walks the line between fear and indulgence with a magnificent swagger. Just thinking about driving it around the Ring flat-out gives me sweaty palms and, conversely, a deep desire to give it a go.

Jethro Bovingdon (@JethroBovingdon)



'Every throttle lift threatens to unleash a load of momentum that you can't contain'



Top: SV's enormous wing has three manually adjustable angles of attack. **Above:** red engine-start cover is emblematic of the theatrical Aventador. **Above left:** 20-inch multi-spoke front wheels cover six-piston calipers and 400mm carbonceramic discs

### Specification

	:02	Power	Torque	0-62mph	Top speed	Weight (dry)	Basic price
V12, 6498cc 370	70g/km	740bhp @ 8400rpm	509lb ft @ 5500rpm	2.8sec (claimed)	217mph+ (limited)	1525kg (493bhp/ton)	£321,723











ExportLessly blending '60s style with cutting-edge technology, the New Classic from Bill Shepherd Mustang is an American icon reimagined. This remarkable machine exudes Big Screen charisma but without histrionics, each car being made by hand to order and packing a 32-valve V8 engine, five-speed 'box and independent all-round suspension. This is more than mere restoration, this is re-engineering; a no excuses classic that can cover ground as fast — if not faster — than most mainstream exotica while boasting looks that are uniquely timeless. Don't follow the herd, buy a true original.





LOOKS GOOD, DOESN'T it? Sounds good, too. But then apart from the odd '80s horror, the Mustang has always known how to push our buttons. That's why more than 4000 Mustangs of various ages are registered in the UK, despite Ford's most prolific sports car never being officially imported. Now, for the first time, Ford has decided to bring Mustang to Blighty. Better still, they'll be right-hand drive.

Do you want one? On face value it's hard to say no, because designer Moray Callum has done a great job of penning this latest one. It's still a beefcake, but there's great definition to its physique and a newfound sharpness to its features. Amongst European traffic it still bursts with Stateside spectacle, but that striking physicality is balanced with neat, confident detailing. It turns heads, no question.

The interior is impressive in appearance but it's made from disappointingly hard and scratchy materials. We always bleat on about stuff like this, and while it makes not a jot of difference to how a car drives, it makes a massive difference to how you feel about being in it. The Ford's not dreadful, but the German brands have set such a high standard it could still be a deal-breaker for some before they've even started the engine.

In the case of the Mustang 5.0 V8 GT, that would be a real shame. There's something elemental about the appeal of a V8, especially when you're sitting peering out over the Mustang's long bonnet. And there's nothing fancy about the way this car goes about its business, which is with a rich, purposeful burble that builds to a solid, authentic howl when you work it hard through the gears. Aurally it's the real deal.

It doesn't quite have the immediate snap of revs and acceleration you might expect from 415bhp and 391lb ft, but a fat spread of power and torque delivers deceptively rapid progress. Coupled to an accurate, clean-shifting six-speed manual transmission, this engine is fun and intuitive to stoke-up. The first five ratios are nicely stacked, but sixth is very obviously there to take big bites out of motorway journeys and try to claw back some mpg. Ford claims the Mustang will hit 62mph in 4.8sec. That seems believable, and on the first stretch of clear, derestricted Autobahn on our test route, the 5.0 shows little hesitation in winding its speedo needle to the stop.

Chassis-wise the big news is the adoption of independent rear suspension (well, you can't rush these things...). It makes a good fist of our admittedly smooth route,

flowing well along the fast sweeping curves and attacking the few hairpins we encountered with poise. The steering's rate of response is fine, but there's not enough initial feel, whichever mode you select, so you tend to gauge how hard you're working the front end from its rate of roll. Once loaded-up there's some relatively early understeer, but you can drive through it with creative use of weight transfer and throttle play. Thanks to a limited-slip diff and a well-judged range of traction and stability modes, you can indulge your inner Frank Bullitt while retaining an electronic safety net. You can also switch everything off.

The brakes are a little too keen to bite, so you have to be measured with your initial application, though feel and response becomes less of an issue during harder, more aggressive driving. The pedals are well set for heel-and-toe, but again,







'The 5.0 shows little hesitation in winding its speedo needle to the stop'



Top right: 5-litre V8 almost has the numbers to match BMW's potent M4. Above right: interior has charisma, but materials might raise an eyebrow from those used to German quality

unless you're working the middle pedal really hard you need delicate footwork to avoid mild whiplash.

If you've got the tiniest drop of gasoline in your blood it's hard not to be swept away by the romance of a new Mustang. Especially one that's coming to the UK. Driving away from Munich airport (where the press cars were assembled) in this red 5.0, the feel-good factor was undeniable, but then driving a Mustang has always been an automotive rite of passage.

The trouble with cultural icons – especially four-wheeled American ones – is that they don't tend to translate very well. Ford has gone the extra mile by moving the steering wheel to the correct side for UK cars. and an extensive development

programme conducted on some of Europe's best roads has ensured the car's dynamics feel more suited to the way we drive. It was even styled by a Scot, for heaven's sake.

But. It's hard to put a finger on precisely what it is, but something doesn't sit well with the Mustang. It has abundant character and offers something refreshingly different, both in the way it looks and the way it drives. It also feels mechanically bombproof and offers great value for money, at least against new European metal. Hell, even some hot hatches cost more!

Where things start to unravel is if you take your notional £34,000 and scan the wider market for nearly new sports coupes. Yes, the novelty

and three-year warranty make the Mustang enticing, but hand on heart, if you were looking for a fun second car (which I suspect describes many of the first 1200 UK orders), could you sign on the dotted line knowing there are low-mileage, late-model examples of BMW's E90 M3 out there for similar money. Or, if four seats aren't essential, the sublime Cayman S? I don't think I could.

That's not to say the new Mustang isn't a capable, likeable machine, but I'll be curious to know how those not steeped in Stang culture feel a few months into ownership. It's one thing having a holiday romance, quite another getting hitched.

Richard Meaden
(@DickieMeaden)

# Specification .

CO2 **Engine** Torque 0-62mph Top speed Weight **Basic price** V8, 4951cc 299g/km 415bhp @ 6500rpm 391 lb ft @ 4250rpm 4.8sec (claimed) 155mph (limited) 1720kg (245bhp/ton) £33,995 🛂 Looks, noise, performance, value, much-improved dynamics and feel 🗧 Image not for everyone, interior materials not up to European standards evo rating



ON THE APPROACH road to Fiat's Balocco proving ground in northern Italy there are a few bends that, in truth, are more interesting and fun to drive than anything within the facility itself. The last-minute saviour of many a photo shoot, the tight little S-shaped complex is made more challenging by an ancient and breathe-in narrow, but thankfully well-sighted, stone bridge bang in the middle. It's best heading towards the proving ground because the road immediately dips away into a long, early-apex left-hander after you crest the short

straight between the bridge walls. As long as you're carrying enough speed, the sudden directional switch is guaranteed to provoke attitude.

It's worked a treat over the years in various Fiats, Alfas and Maseratis, each unsettled sufficiently to look, as most snappers put it, as if they're 'doing something'. The Alfa 4C Spider has other ideas. At speeds already comfortably in excess of anything I've driven through there before, it just sticks, nails the line and, I suspect, gives a little 'that the best you got?' shrug.

The nature of these things is to wind it up until something does

'With the Boxster and Elise showing what's possible, criticisms of the 4C coupe can't simply be swept under the carpet' happen. In the 4C Spider's case, it doesn't until photographer Aston Parrott levers himself and his bulky kit bag back into the cosy but roofless cabin, albeit with a little more grace than would have been possible in the coupe. Nothing is said, but a shared sense of frustration aggravated by curiosity kind of dictates what happens next. One last go, then, more or less flat-out.

So far it's been a fascinating but, in many ways, perplexing day in which the subtext has overshadowed the main story. Yes, for a few quid short of £60k you can have a 4C with a roll-up fabric









Top right: ingress is easier without the roof; the small, hard seats are still uncomfortable.

Above left and above right: in white the open 4C looks sensational, the body colour contrasting with the black fabric roof and the Spider's carbon windscreen pillars and header rail

roof that stows in the boot. But what we really want to find out is if Alfa's tinkering with the 4C's chassis has made it the rewarding drivers' car its mid-engined layout, carbon monocogue and unassisted steering suggest it should be.

Or what Alfa thinks it is. Earlier on, in the pre-drive press conference. I swear the glossy intro film's script has been written by the same person responsible for the trippy descriptions of expensive aftershave smells in the back of in-flight magazines and, during the presentation that follows, the exquisitely formed little Alfa is

constantly referred to as a 'supercar'.

Although the price of the 4C Spider is enough to make you swallow hard, it isn't and it doesn't need this kind of baggage. What it needs to be is a car that gives proper service to its purist philosophy and, at the very least, adds up to the sum of its parts. Up to now, despite its chassis' remarkable tenacity and a very obvious demonstration of speed through lightness rather than raw power – its 1.75-litre turbo four delivers 237bhp – the experience from the driver's seat has been a mess, the good things stymied by a jarring ride, old-fashioned turbo

lag, a hard-to-modulate throttle on boost, a booming but characterless exhaust note, weirdly inconsistent steering weight and tiresome camber sensitivity. With cars like the Lotus Elise and Porsche Boxster showing what's possible, and with less exotic build techniques, the criticisms can't simply be swept under the carpet.

And, according to the engineers present at the Spider's launch, they haven't been. Wait until you drive it, they say. Hanging on isn't easy because, for a weight penalty of just 45kg (940kg versus the coupe's 895), the 4C Spider's looks are even more



Left: 4C Spider certainly doesn't lack mechanical grip, but turbo lag means finding a rhythm is almost impossible. Below: roof removal and storage is reasonably hassle-free



come-hither than the coupe's. It's a car you want to leap into and head for the nearest great road in.

Bar the odd fraction, the Spider is as impressively quick as the coupe: 0-62mph in 4.5sec, 160mph flatout. There's now a choice of three exhaust systems, too – standard (loud), race (very loud) and, at extra cost, Akrapovic, which has a switchable valve giving a choice between the two volume settings. Specific to the Spider is a bespoke engine cover sporting a brace of rear buttresses and xenon headlights rather than the naked many-bugeyed affair that some people take exception to on the coupe.

With the co-operation of some colleagues, we head out of Balocco in a couple of Spiders at the spec extremes, one as hardcore as it gets with the stiffest suspension, fattest wheels and most anti-social exhaust effusions, the other with 'comfort' suspension (minus rear anti-roll bar), 17-inch wheels and a notably more muted note behind. Unclipping and refitting the 7kg roof is a largely

fumble-free, two-minute exercise and possibly more impressive for the snug refinement it provides when in place, though hair-ruffling is kept to a minimum even with it in the boot.

Admitting only to detail changes at the front end and a marginal shift in weight distribution (40:60 versus 35:65 for the coupe), whatever Alfa's chassis engineers have done has improved the steering. It's still quite heavy – much heavier than that of an Elise – moves about in your hands and kicks back over ruts and transverse ridges. But it's much more consistent than before, weighting up progressively with speed and sending back a less corrupted, more coherent picture of what the front wheels are doing.

It's the same deal in both cars but better appreciated in the more softly sprung, smaller-wheeled Spider, which adds a degree of flow to the process whereas the full-on car is more of a fight.

But the encouraging vibe swiftly evaporates when we hit a long straight with some mild surface

# 'The Spider flew over the bridge, landed beautifully, went a bit sideways and scampered noisily off'

contours, as that old camber sensitivity returns to derail stability and defeat even the most nuanced attempts to keep the car tracking straight. More unwelcome 4C foibles join in on what should be a riotous blast on a road that zigzags into the hills above the town of Pray. The Spiders romp to the top at an eye-watering lick but in a series of borderline loony lunges reliant on sky-high reserves of grip and braking power. The laggy engine response and over-zesty mid-range make it

impossible to achieve anything like a satisfying rhythm, though, again, the more modestly specced car seems marginally more relaxed without sacrificing any appreciable grip.

Back at Balocco on the largely smooth, sweeping, constant-radius curves of its long-lap test track, the 4C Spider seems almost sublime, nudging its claimed 1.1G of cornering power with something approaching blasé contempt, hunkering down from high speed with arrow-straight stability, its dual-clutch, paddlefed motor hauling back the high numbers on a ball of relentless, onboost energy. No wonder there are concerned Alfa faces when well tell them about our road-trip problems.

Then again, they should have seen that final run down the road outside with Aston in the passenger seat. The Spider flew over the bridge (literally), landed beautifully, went a bit sideways and scampered noisily but triumphantly off towards the gatehouse. It does some things brilliantly. Just not enough.

David Vivian (@davidjvivian)

# **Specification**

 Engine
 CO2
 Power
 Torque
 0-62mph
 Top speed
 Weight
 Basic price

 In-line 4-cyl, 1742cc, turbo
 342g/km
 237bhp @ 6000rpm
 258lb ft @ 2200-4250rpm
 4.5sec (claimed)
 160mph (claimed)
 940kg (256bhp/ton)
 £59,500

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# Jaguar F-type S Coupe Manual

AT A TIME WHEN most premium car manufacturers are consciously moving

away from the manual transmission, Jaguar has gone to significant lengths to offer a stick and three pedals in its F-type sports car. A cynic might say it's a self-serving, loss-leading move designed to communicate the marque's apparent commitment to delivering engaging driving dynamics as much as it's a response to market demand, but the F-type line-up is, nonetheless, more complete for offering an alternative to the familiar eight-speed automatic.

The manual gearbox is part of the MY2016 update, which also introduces a revised infotainment system, electric in place of hydraulic power steering, and the option of four-wheel drive (but not in tandem with the manual gearbox). The new transmission option can be specified on both V6 and V6 S models, in either coupe or convertible form, but the range-topping V8 R remains auto only. In terms of purity, then, the

V6 S Coupe with a manual 'box – as tested here – could be the pick of the F-type line-up.

Shifting gears oneself and revmatching on the way down the cogs certainly feels like a natural. appropriate thing to be doing in a two-seater sports car, particularly one with such a willing engine and eager chassis as this. The gearshift quality itself is commendable - certainly improved over the prototype versions we drove earlier this year - with a tight, well-defined gate. There's plenty of weight in the throw, which is fitting rather than unwelcome in a barrel-chested British sports car, but it can be a little notchy, particularly when grabbing second gear from first in a hurry. A Porsche Cayman's manual gearbox does offer a slicker, more satisfying shift action, but the Jaguar's is hardly put to shame. There is no automatic rev-match function - Jaguar either wants the driver to do the work or it didn't have the resources to develop such a system – but the pedals are ideally spaced for a spot of heel-and-toe.

Do a manual transmission option and electric power steering make or break the updated F-type?

Test location: Monticello, New York, USA GPS: 41.66550, -74.69516



The ratios are well matched to the supercharged V6 engine's linear, torque-rich delivery, too. In fact, the manual 'box and the F-type are such natural bedfellows you wonder why it wasn't done sooner. The process of stirring a lever while matching engine and road speeds will always have a timeless appeal, and the F-type is simply more fun more of the time with a manual.

The V6 S Coupe remains a sweetly balanced sports car, one that feels alert and agile in hard cornering. The front axle finds tremendous turn-in bite and the chassis feels very tautly controlled – more so than with other F-types we've tried. In contrast to the convertible, which can shudder over rough surfaces, the coupe's structure feels very rigid, adding to

the sense of precision in the chassis.

The previous version's hydraulic power steering never gave it the most feelsome of helms – it was also quite darty and light in weight – so although the new electric system is a little short in communication terms, its more natural, predictable rate of response does at least mean the switch to EPAS is not a backwards step. The rack is also direct and free of slack, so pointing that eager front end towards an apex soon becomes an instinctive exercise.

The hurricane-force V8 will always have a basic appeal all of its own, but this V6 S still has enough straight-line performance to match the promise of the exterior styling and make the most of the responsive chassis. With much less weight over the front axle it also feels sharper and more agile than the V8, with less inertia to overcome in direction changes. Teamed with the manual 'box, the V6 S Coupe is an altogether purer, more delicate kind of sports car than the V8, and our pick of the entire F-type range.

Dan Prosser (@TheDanProsser)

# **Specification**

Engine CO2 Torque 0-60mph Top speed Weight **Basic price** V6, 2995cc, supercharger 234g/km 375bhp @ 6500rpm 339lb ft @ 3500-5000rpm 5.3sec (claimed) 1584kg (241bhp/ton) £60,260 171mph (claimed) \*\*\*\* ■ Manual 'box makes the F-type more engaging than ever 📮 Very few buyers will ever specify it evo rating

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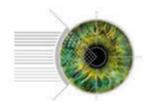
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# BMW M6 Competition Package

**Test location:** A413, Buckinghamshire **GPS:** 51.850650, -0.827821

Porsche 911 Turbo S-beating power and real practicality. But is it great to drive?

AS MID-LIFE FACELIFTS go, BMW's effort for the M6 is on the subtle side. There are new LED headlights, a new kidney grille and front bumper, and the indicators now sit within the door mirrors.

However, the facelift also brings with it a new Competition Package that sees the 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 gain 40bhp over the regular M6 (and 25bhp over the previous Competition Package), pushing peak power to 592bhp. Torque is up too, by 15lb ft to 516lb ft, while the claimed 0-62mph time is cut by 0.3sec to 3.9sec.

BMW says the pack brings over £10,000-worth of kit, including firmer springs, dampers and anti-roll bars, a recalibrated Active M Differential and stability control, and new mapping for the electric power steering. This makes the £7300 asking price seem reasonably generous, but consider that it also takes the total outlay to within a whisker of £100,000.

The M6 has always felt like a bit of a curio. It's never had the following of the M3 or the cult status of the M5, but it has held a certain appeal for some and it's easy to understand why, not least because it fills that

very small 'two-door, four-seater GT car with a supercar turn of pace' niche. Jaguar's XKR and R-S models may have had the numbers to match the big BMW, but they didn't offer the practicality. Likewise the ubiquitous Porsche 911, which, unfortunately for the 6-series, makes up in thrills for what it gives away in practicality. Yet even if this revised M6 had been available for issue 210's Mercedes-AMG GT group test, we doubt it would have faired much better than the i8 we did bring along. Although that, perhaps, says more about the tough selection of cars we assembled than the M6's fallibilities.

The new M6 is one of those cars that allows you to get in and drive it how you want to. Yes, you need to set the damper, steering and throttle maps to your liking (respectively Comfort, Sport and Sport for me), but from there you can go about your business of travelling at a serious pace without drawing too much attention to yourself (so long as you avoid the Melbourne Red of this car).

The V8 is a real honey. It's not quite as vocal or charismatic as Mercedes' new twin-turbocharged V8, found in the GT and C63, but it's



got a lovely deep, turbine-like howl when you open the throttle and let the revs run out to 6000rpm. The last 1500rpm in particular delivers a seriously demonic soundtrack that's all-consuming and demands that you don't pull back on the right-hand paddle until you're a couple of hundred revs shy of the limiter. This is as wonderful an engine in the M6 as it is in the infectiously good M5.

The steering is precise and offers up a more natural feel and weight than our M4 Fast Fleeter does in the same settings. Meanwhile the substantial body is nicely controlled through fast sweeping bends, which allows you to maintain your pace and enjoy the M6's relentless turbocharged performance.

However, like in our M4, the M6's rear axle struggles if you deploy all the torque at once, and if you've left



the traction control switched on it slows acceleration as if you've been hooked up to an oak tree. Switch it off and the rear Michelin Pilot Super Sports make a break for freedom if the surface is anything but GP-circuit smooth. Torque limiting at low revs in the first three of the seven gears wouldn't go amiss...

Overall the M6 makes a strong case for itself. It's never going to have the dynamic edge of a Nissan GT-R or an AMG GT, but for those who want the grandest of two-door grand tourers, BMW's 592bhp four-seat coupe is hard to ignore. Competition Package-equipped cars share some of the specialness of the brilliant (and identically engined) M5 30 Jahre Edition, and for now this M6 is the best two-door M-car.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

## **Specification**

Engine CO2 Torque 0-62mph Top speed Weight **Basic price** V8, 4395cc, twin-turbo 231g/km 592bhp @ 6000rpm 516lb ft @ 1500-6000rpm 1850kg (325bhp/ton) £99,650 3.9sec (claimed) 155mph (limited) evo rating 🛂 V8 one of the sweetest, and helps make this M6 the best M-coupe 📘 Still missing something compared to an M5





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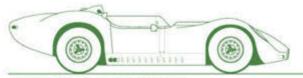
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# Porsche Cayenne GTS

**Test location:** B660, Cambridgeshire **GPS:** 52.247773, -0.628624

Downsizing finally hits **evo**'s SUV of choice, but not at the expense of power

THERE'S ALWAYS

concern when a manufacturer starts talking about its back catalogue of the exotic and iconic when launching a new model. For some occasions it's to be expected. Who could deny Ford a misty-eyed trip down memory lane when it announced its latest Focus RS? However, it was a touch unsettling to read about Porsche's 904 GTS in the press material that accompanied the new Cayenne GTS.

For those unfamiliar with Porsche's lesser-known '60s icons, the 904 Carrera GTS, to give it its full name, was designed by Butzi Porsche, the son of Ferry Porsche and whose CV also included the original 911. When asked of his favourite design, he would declare it to be the mid-mounted flat-sixengined, fibreglass-bodied 904. And who can blame him? It's not only one of the most beautiful looking Porches of all time, but one of the most beautiful to drive, too. A true road-racer, the 904 is one of Porsche's finest achievements, which is saying something.

How, then, is the delectable



740kg 904 in any way comparable with the 2110kg Cayenne GTS? The connection is tenuous to say the least. It starts with both cars being powered by an engine with six cylinders and ends with a 0-62mph time split by just two tenths (5.4sec for the 904, 5.2 for the Cayenne). And that's it. Someone really should send the Porsche marketing machine on a long holiday.

Back to the subject in question. This is the third iteration of the Cayenne GTS, the first having arrived in 2007 with a tweaked 4.8-litre naturally aspirated petrol V8, shorter gear ratios for improved acceleration, a Cayenne Turbo nose job and fresh from a trip to the Alcantara trimmers. For this latest edition the final two of those features still holds true, but the former are no longer. In place of

the V8 is the Cayenne S's 3.6-litre twin-turbo V6, and as with all Cayenne GTS models that have gone before, there's more power (434bhp – a 20bhp increase), with torque increasing by 62lb ft to 442lb ft. The eight-speed Tiptronic S gearbox is carried over from the regular S.

Other GTS technical highlights include a chassis that combines conventional steel springs with Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM), lowering the ride height by 24mm compared with a Cayenne S. If you go for the optional air suspension, and you really should, the drop is only 20mm. The brakes are donated by the Turbo, with 390mm discs and six-piston calipers for the front, 358mm with four-pots at the rear. PCCB carbonceramics are an option.

The new turbocharged motor may be cleaner and pleasing to emissions bureaucrats, yet it lacks that devilish growl and sharp throttle response of its predecessor, and during our tenure, which combined deadly dull motorway commutes with crosscountry sprints, it also proved to be no more efficient at drinking superunleaded. In fact it averaged roughly

22mpg – the same as we'd seen with the old, V8-engined car.

The new turbocharged engine is impressive, however. The mid-range surge wants for nothing - peak torque arrives at 1500rpm and stays with you until 5000rpm - and the top end remains remarkably sharp and strong to the red line. Throw in a responsive auto 'box (so long as you use the paddles) and direct steering and the GTS will embarrass a Golf GTI on the right road. The only downsides are the car's PASM damping settings, which never feel perfect for the job asked of them, with Comfort being too soft for anything but a multi-lane road, Sport not precise enough and Sport Plus is best left for the track.

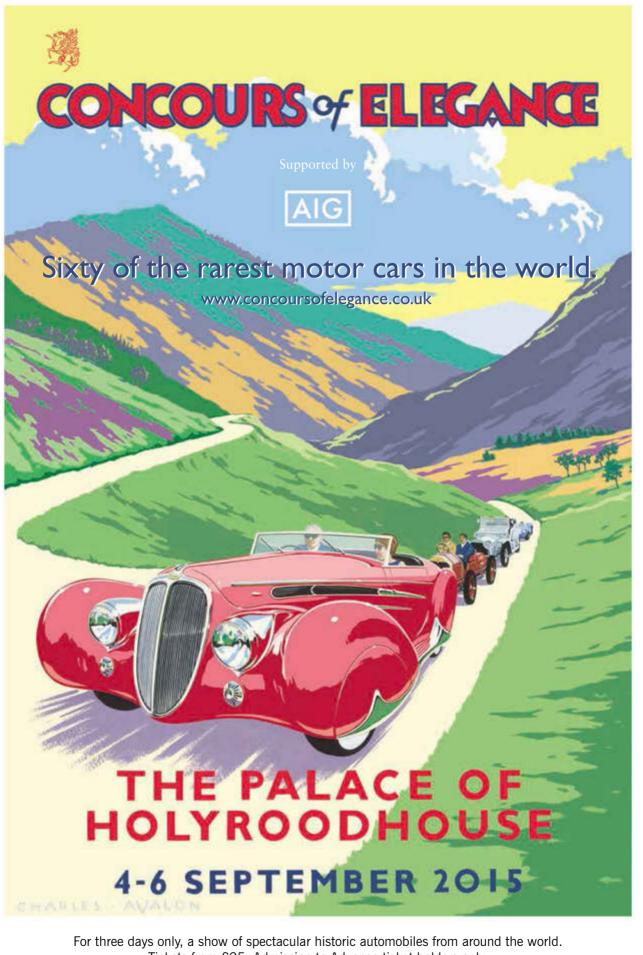
But the real problem facing the GTS, and all Cayennes for that matter, is that despite the dynamic advantage they have over their rivals, the rest of the package is beginning to feel its age. The GTS is good – it's our Cayenne of choice – but in the fast-paced world of SUV development it's starting to be caught by the competition.

(@stuartg917)

Specification

Engine CO2 Torque 0-62mph Top speed Weight **Basic price** V6, 3604cc, twin-turbo 228g/km 434bhp @ 6000rpm 442lb ft @ 1600-5000rpm 2110kg (209bhp/ton) £72,523 5.2sec (claimed) 163mph (claimed) evo rating The driver's Cayenne... 

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# Meaden wonders whether the balance of power in the supercar hierarchy could soon shift – with Ferrari losing out

W

**WAY BACK IN THE DIM AND DISTANT** past, when the ink was barely dry on the first issue of **evo** and Harry Metcalfe had yet to have his left arm replaced with a selfie stick, our technical editor – the late Jeff Daniels – pondered the

heretical notion of a diesel Ferrari. It was a brilliantly controversial but far from a crackpot suggestion, and one that got the dobbin fanciers' 'SF' monogrammed knickers in a right old twist.

So, in the spirit of blatant plagiarism and in recognition of Jeff's original iconoclastic idea, I've been wondering what the future holds for Ferrari. On the face of it there's nothing to worry about. Well, apart from the proliferation of branded tat – sorry, 'merchandising' – plastered with the sacred Scuderia's emblem. But that's another column. The question remains: can Ferrari successfully segue from a present informed by the past to a future that could demand a desertion of what went before?

Think about it. Ferrari is the very definition of petrol-powered passion, a maker of engines that are more akin to musical instruments than machines of propulsion. To drive a Ferrari from any era is to have an understanding of the enduring affair we humans enjoy with fast, beautiful, noisy cars. Yet all the indications are of a future that's quieter, cleaner and powered by electricity.

Of course, every other car brand would kill for the folklore, heritage and mouth-watering back catalogue of iconic cars that together make Ferrari unique, but in these turbulent technological times it's hard not to conclude that the understandable impulse to respect, and not rip-up, that tradition is actually a major headache for those in charge of steering Ferrari into Q2 of the 21st century.

Only this month Ferrari launched the all-new 488 GTB, complete with a twin-turbocharged V8 engine. As I write, I've not read anything about the car or its motor, but I'm sure the motor will be the most divisive element of the car. Why? Because with the glorious exceptions of the 288 GTO and F40, traditionally – and so far as most of us are concerned – Ferrari Doesn't Do Turbos. Moreover, you just know that were it not for increasingly stringent emissions regulations, Ferrari wouldn't go out of its way to grasp the forced-induction nettle. And let's face it, why would you when your naturally aspirated engines are the envy of the world?

The LaFerrari was an opportunity to showcase tomorrow's technology, yet of the hybrid holy trinity, LaF is the most 20th century in the way it delivers its performance, thanks to a screaming V12 and no capability to run on batteries alone. Or rather it was designed to have a zero-emission mode, but Ferrari decided to pull the plug on it, so to speak. Don't get me wrong, I like that attitude, not least because one day I'll be a strange old man

hoarding petrol in his shed and revving my smelly old sports car while my neighbours' cars recharge silently in their garages. But when Tesla already builds a near-700bhp saloon that'll pin you to the driver's seat with the insistence of a 458 Speciale, how long can Ferrari continue to ignore the elephant in the room?

It would take immense bravery – or lunacy – to sever technological ties with almost 70 years of unrivalled tradition, yet the danger is that while Ferrari squeezes every last drop of performance and excitement from the 20th century's best-loved propulsion system, rivals old and new forge ahead with radical products and responsive, reshaped brand messaging.

Ferrari is not alone in this conundrum. BMW took the plunge with the i8, and it is a truly wondrous thing to drive. Yet if you're being cold-hearted, it remains a petrol-electric halfway house conceived to allay 2015 hang-ups about range anxiety – 30mpg

# 'How long can Ferrari continue to ignore the elephant in the room?'

is no great shakes and the petrol engine relies on a synthesiser to keep us interested. It's a short-term answer, but it's not the solution. By contrast, Audi – still regarded as a newcomer to the supercar scene – is one of the few brands apparently not bound by tradition. Witness the resurrected R8 e-tron, which promises sub-4.0sec to 62mph acceleration from a 450bhp, 679lb ft electric powertrain with a promised range of 280 miles.

If you're Tesla's Elon Musk – a man who also builds space rockets, don't forget – even the e-tron must seem a bit like one of his old school projects, yet he must appreciate the unenviable challenge that faces a company so steeped in glory and tradition as Ferrari. It certainly underlines how the greatest advantage for brands such as Tesla, and to a lesser extent Audi, is the freedom to innovate without looking to the past for permission and reassurance. Do I want to see a Tesla supercar? Hell yes! Do I relish a future in which Ferraris whir rather than how!? Hell *no*.

Perhaps I'm doing Ferrari a disservice. Perhaps it has the lithium-ion equivalent of Colombo's V12 screaming away in some hidden dyno room. Perhaps the truth of the matter is not whether Ferrari can embrace the future, but whether we are emotionally prepared to allow it to.

@DickieMeaden

Richard is a contributing editor to **evo** and one of the magazine's founding team



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# Petrolhead

by RICHARD PORTER



Apple could take on the world's established car makers, says Porter, but why would it ever want to?

D

**DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT MOBILE** phones were like a decade ago? Mostly, they were crap. And it was acknowledging this fact that prompted Apple to develop their own phone, because they knew with unwavering conviction

that they could do better. They were right.

Likewise, with the tablet computer. The fruity peoples of California didn't invent that, but they did see a gap in the market for one that worked with a smooth slickness, thereby creating a big-selling item people didn't know they wanted until they saw it. Not quite as earth-shattering as the phone because no one really needs to carry around a touch-sensitive slab of internet, but a little landmark nonetheless.

Then we come to the recent Apple Watch. Here things get less earth-shattering. Apple didn't invent the watch nor even the smartwatch but, as with the iPad, they've taken an existing idea and tried to make it slicker, smarter and more reassuringly expensive. Yet to the wider world it's not completely clear what the end benefit is because it's a watch; its primary business is telling the time, and all watches do that. I'm not sure anyone who already has a watch is desperate to get Apple's take on it.

The iPhone felt like a game-changing new generation of technology, the iPad felt like an existing idea refined to make it desirable, the Watch seems like adding a few whizzy features to a piece of kit that's served us perfectly well for many years. And this brings me to the ongoing rumour that Apple is going to make a car. Where, you might wonder, would that fit on this spectrum?

It's always possible that in a secret lab in California, Apple is hard at work on a propulsion system so advanced and incredible it'll make your head burst. But when you remember it takes more than half a decade and the thick end of a billion dollars for someone like Ford to create a brand new internal combustion engine, how long would it take for a company with no automotive experience to pull something completely fresh out of the air? Maybe so long that by the time it's ready, existing car companies have got their own new propulsion systems on the market, and then Apple isn't peddling the brave new world tech that would make it stand out.

Perhaps we should assume that actually an Apple car would be a clever refinement of an existing niche idea. Which, logically, would be an electric car. What would you imagine Apple's take on that to be like? Very crisp industrial design. A stylish minimalism to the major controls. Endless complaints from less sympathetic users about the battery life and grumbling over the substantial price. Trouble is, you can already find all of these facets in a car that's on sale today. It's called the Volkswagen e-up. It's nicely designed,

doesn't go very far on a charge and its price tag is substantial. Apple would have to put in a lot of time and money to beat the efforts of VW, or for that matter Nissan or Kia or Tesla.

Of course, the third solution is that the iPeople come up with a conventional car, but one designed to look crisp and shiny and Jonathan Ive-ish. It'll have some clever features but, in an analogue of the problem faced by the Apple Watch, most people will overlook those elements because they already have a perfectly good car that does everything required of it so why pay over the odds for one with a fruity logo on the back?

Whichever of those three imagined options Apple went with, the biggest problem they'd face would be simply entering an alien world of time-consuming, money-guzzling complexity and international regulation. Let's not forget that no lesser person than Professor Gordon Murray said one of the hardest parts of the

# 'Apple would have to put in a lot of **time** and money to beat the efforts of VW'

McLaren F1 project was simply getting the doors to fit properly. Given the build and design integrity of the average Apple product, you'd imagine they'd want to get this right. And getting it right takes a long, long time.

Of course, there's always option four for the iCar. Which is not to bother at all. And if Apple really is thinking about car making, that's surely the one they'll find most tempting. Rather than enter a competitive yet profit-squeezed world others have made their own, there have to be easier wins in fields that Apple already understands.

That said, if they really want to get into cars in some way, there's one thing they could improve overnight with the benefit of their experience. Have you been into an Apple shop recently? Have you experienced the pleasant environment, the warm welcome, the keen, knowledgeable staff? And have you contrasted that with the frequently dismal experience of trying to buy a new car, where you're met with surly disinterest from ill-informed morons repelling you with a suffocating miasma of cheap aftershave and misplaced entitlement?

I can't imagine why Apple would want to build a car of its own. But I'd love it if they invented a better way to sell them.

(a) @sniffpetrol

Richard is evo's longest-serving columnist and is the keyboard behind sniffpetrol.com

















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# Champ by DARIO FRANCHITTI

With clauses named after the drivers who prompted their inception, the contractual side of motorsport can be as amusing as it is severe, says Dario

THERE'S BEEN PLENTY OF FUSS IN THE papers about the value of Lewis Hamilton's latest contract with Mercedes AMG Petronas, but honestly I'm not at all surprised. That's not to say I don't think £30million is an astonishing annual

salary, However, Alonso is on similar money over at struggling McLaren and it's not hard to imagine that the Italians are paying Vettel more. Then consider that Lewis's hero, Ayrton Senna, is said to have been paid \$1million a race by McLaren as far back as 1993 and it becomes clear that drivers are paid whatever somebody is willing to pay them. We should also remember that all these drivers are out there risking their lives, which isn't the case for Lionel Messi or LeBron James, unparalleled as those guys are.

Of more interest to anybody curious about the Mercedes-Hamilton deal was the timeline. Lewis said in March that contract negotiations were '99.6 per cent done', so how did it take weeks from that point to wrap everything up? The delay was most likely caused by lawyers from both sides tying up considerations for

every cosmic eventuality - the more complicated the better, as far as they're concerned - that might arise during the course of the threeyear contract and possibly even beyond that. That's symptomatic of the intricate world racing drivers now inhabit, and growing stakes in the form of growing pay packets are going to make matters more convoluted as sponsors and teams have so much to lose.

I've been lucky enough to deal with people I trust during my time in motorsport - notably Julian Jakobi, who also took care of the commercial affairs of both Prost and Senna and reined in my youthful impulses - so my contract negotiations were often relatively quick and carefree. An arrangement with Chip Gnassi Racing for the 2009 season, for instance, came about when I was in Detroit watching my younger brother, Marino. At the time I was in NASCAR and didn't intend a return to IndyCar, but within halfan-hour Chip and I had agreed the financial terms of a contract – he even wanted me to sign a napkin that instant! I didn't, but in the end we went from square-one to a signed deal in 48 hours, which is so quick nowadays it almost seems reckless.

F1 is a different animal altogether, and the era when driver A would sign to drive exclusively for team B that would pay him X amount – and that was it – is long gone. My experience in the top echelon of racing goes as far as a pre-contract I had to sign with Jaguar's F1 team in 2000 for a test at Silverstone. It related to circumstances that might arise if the test was successful and I was offered a seat for the following season – even down to the number of hotel rooms I'd require on race weekends, and all this before I'd

set foot anywhere near the car! In any case, the test was a disaster, but it echoed a situation three years earlier with McLaren, where I was offered a long-term test-driver role that came with a 65page contract. Both tomes were riddled with the kind of subtly suffocating details for which F1 contracts are notorious.

The penalties for breaking these stipulations – and not just in F1 – can be nauseatingly severe. One IndyCar driver, who shall remain nameless, always ran a wee bit heavy, so much so that his team popped a target weight into his contract. Almost inevitably he was eventually fined - \$500,000 - for turning up a few pounds overweight on race day. That's a pretty serious sum. Attire is another one, with drivers made to wear black trousers and forgo

# 'God only knows how Mercedes feels about Lewis riding his MV Agusta'

trainers and such on pain of surprisingly heavy fines. As I've never had a problem with tyres of the biological variety or been particularly poorly dressed, neither ever troubled me. But like most drivers I did have a contractual nemesis: dangerous sports.

Teams won't think twice about letting a driver go for breaking these clauses because while a portly driver might lose a few tenths a lap, a driver with his legs in a cast won't even get the opportunity to do so. Naively as far as the team was concerned, my first contract didn't contain any such clause, but things quickly changed when I broke my back on a motorcycle before crashing an E-type at Goodwood. So, no motorcycles and absolutely no historic motorsport, I was told. From there the dangerous sports clause in my contract grew like a horribly dogged weed, and by the time I retired, driving a racing car was just about the only thing I was legally permitted to do. God only knows how Mercedes feels about Lewis riding his MV Agusta - or indeed how he managed to sneak it into his contract - but good for him!

Ultimately anyone with eyes in their head could see that Lewis wanted to drive for Mercedes and that was also what the team desperately wanted, so the contract, though seemingly stalled, was never in any doubt. And the money? Two Shelby Cobra 427s, a McLaren P1 and a bespoke Pagani Zonda demonstrate that at least the lad knows how to spend it.

@dariofranchitti

Dario is a three-time Indy 500 winner and four-time IndyCar champ

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# What's put points on your licence this month?



# Challenge accepted

Huge thanks to Henry Catchpole for his excellent article on the Defender Challenge by Bowler in evo 207. I had been contemplating a return to racing having sold my Caterham Roadsport race car 12 years ago. After reading Henry's article, an evening of internet research and a 'go for it!' from the wife, I decided the Defender Challenge was for me.

I contacted Bowler Motorsport the next day and within the week had agreed to buy the press car that Henry drove.

So only five weeks after reading Henry's article, I lined up on the start line of my first rally, the Somerset Stages, having slept little for the previous two nights due to the mix of excitement, anticipation and some trepidation.

The result? I haven't grinned so much in years. What a fantastic group of people, an amazing car and a gripping form of motorsport. The gravel stages proved to be particularly thrilling, terrifying and at times hilarious.

I owe a big thank you to Henry for his excellent article. It was definitely a life-enhancing read, as I now find myself contemplating my Dakar debut...

Brian Palmer



# The Letter of the Month wins an Elliot Brown watch

This month's star letter writer receives an Elliot Brown Canford 202-009 (pictured), worth £375. It features a brushed gunmetal case and an oxblood-burgundy leather strap, the latter inspired by the Englishness of Chesterfield sofas, cricket balls and DM boots!

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# BMW bounce? What bounce?

It surprises me how people have different experiences with the same cars. In **evo**mail in issue 210, Mr Lintott criticises the handling of his 335i Sport and likens it to your experience with the M235i in the TTS group test. Now, I don't know about the M235i, which is a different beast entirely, but I own a 330i M Sport and cannot fault the handling. Sure, the runflats crash and bang over the hundreds of potholes we have here in Sussex, but otherwise it's superb. I can throw it around on twisty roads and pin it through roundabouts just like I did the Boxster I had before. Vertical inputs? I don't see the problem...

### Adrian Marshall

# Keep it simple

Enjoyed the article on Magnus Walker and Sharkwerks (evo 209). I'd love a project like Walker's 277 but my budget doesn't stretch that far. What it does stretch to is an S1 Peugeot 106 Rallye with a 1.6-litre TU5J4 lump, so I was pleased to see Richard Meaden's Rallye reappearing in Fast Fleet.

Not sure what power steering he's thinking of fitting, but it brought back memories of a Saxo VTR I had with variable power steering – sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. When it didn't, it had the best steering feel of any car I've driven. When it did (excitingly often mid-corner), it was over-light and frankly bloody awful.

I'm pleased my Rallye doesn't have it. Along with wind-up windows and no ABS, it appeals to the sort of Luddite who has 209 back issues of evo in the spare bedroom because I like something physical to flick through whilst I eat my breakfast.

James Williams



Above: James Williams preferred his Saxo when its power steering wasn't working

# **Vive la différence!**

Having recently worked in China for three months, I was fascinated by the eclectic range of vehicles I saw there. from the hideous Citroën and VW saloons that are inexplicably popular as Chinese taxis, to the rakishly handsome. RWD Toyota Reiz.

It reminded me of my excitement as a young lad when I finally encountered the original Renault Twingo in its native France, and of my first real vehicular love, an awful 1980s Buick Skylark (maroon, with matching dashboard and squashy velour upholstery!), purchased while travelling in the States as a student.

Market-specific models seem rarer than ever now, with increasing numbers of 'world cars' being produced. We should enjoy niche foreign-market models while we still can, before our **evo** world becomes ever more homogenised!

# Will Hazell

# **Woking wonders**

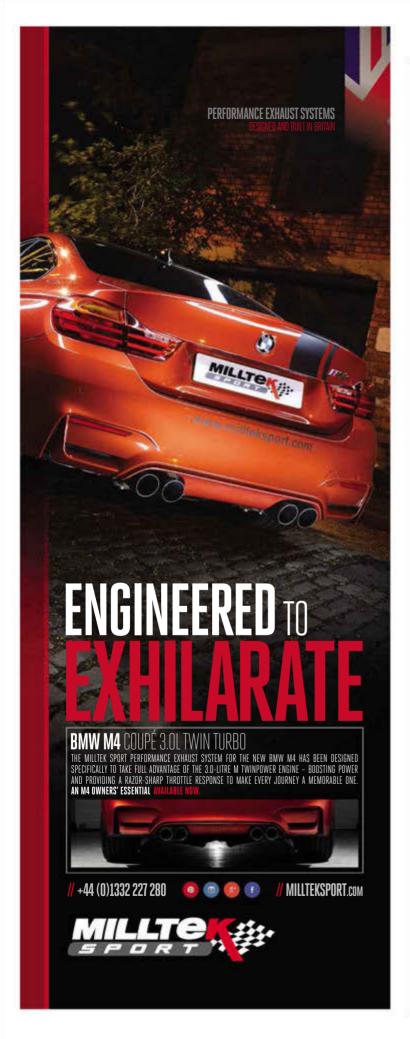
Really enjoyed Colin Goodwin's article about the racing history of Woking (evo 209). I have fond memories of the town from childhood summer visits to see my grandparents there. Imagine my pride and playground bragging rights when my grandfather, as mayor of Woking in 1984-85, visited the McLaren factory as guest of honour and the whole team posed for a photo on Albert Drive.

I still have that photo today, in pride of place on my study wall, with my grandfather standing next to legends Niki Lauda, Alain Prost and Ron Dennis. I wonder how many of the people in that picture, aside from Ron, could have imagined one day they would be building supercars in the amazing McLaren Technology Centre!

Jonathan Tomlinson



Above: Jonathan Tomlinson's grandfather with the mid-'80s McLaren team in Woking





# Forgotten gems

Last month we drove the original, Japan-only 'EK9' Honda Civic Type R (pictured) and discovered it has been criminally overlooked. So we asked what models you thought deserved to be revisited and reappraised. Here's what you said.

Alongside the EK9 there's the Nissan Pulsar VZ-R N1 with 197bhp from a naturally aspirated 1.6, although with a less focused chassis and transmission. There's also the turbocharged Pulsar GTI-R.

### kad

MG ZS 180. Double wishbones all round, a sweet V6, and all in a small saloon body. I drove a few and they handled great.

# \_Who\_

The Citroën Xsara VTS. It had the same engine as the Peugeot 306 GTI 6, a slightly more interesting chassis and the benefit of a five-speed 'box that perfectly suited what has to still be one of the greatest naturally aspirated four-cylinder engines ever. And it really was largely forgotten about, as was its predecessor, the ZX 16v.

### Swervin\_Mervin

You could mention pretty much any Citroën version of a PSA hot hatch in this discussion.

# zedleg

Citroën Visa GTi. Brilliant car – had two of them and wish I'd never sold them. The 205 gets all the attention and praise, but its Visa cousin was a cracking car in its own right.

### Will Knott

Citroen Xantia Activa. Not because of horsepower but for its ability to take corners. For me, performance is not all about horsepower, it's about handling.

**DStwentyone** 

Rover 200 BRM. Well, maybe not. Mine was a shed, but it had an amazingly supple yet responsive chassis, absolutely perfectly suited to bumpy B-roads.

# integrale\_evo

Daihatsu Charade GTti. Fastest 1-litre car by a mile when it was on sale. 0-60mph in 7.9sec is still fast today. God bless turbocharging! Or what about the Fiat Uno Turbo?

# Scott Dee

The CA5A Mitsubishi Colt GTI. It was out around the same time as the Mk2 Golf GTI, but was so much better in every respect except perhaps looks. Back to Hondas, I'd nominate the Accord Type R. Not as nimble as the DC2 ITR or EK9 CTR, but up there with the best FWD saloon cars I've driven.

### Matt\_N

Toyota Starlet GT Turbo EP82. It had a 1.3-litre turbo engine and the options list included Recaro seats, TEMS suspension (electronic damping control), an LSD and a hi/lo boost button. Standard power was 133bhp, but they could be increased to above 200bhp with breathing and fuelling modifications.

### **Christian Fahy**

Nissan Primera GT. What other finehandling, practical and reliable sports saloon with a successful motorsport pedigree can you easily get for under a grand? Not that I'm at all biased by owning one...

Alan Taylor-Jones

# Join the discussion

Keep an eye on evo.co.uk or follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/ evomagazine) to participate in our regular Talking Point debates. The best comments will be published here each month From the forums: community.evo.co.uk/forums

# Thread of the Month

# Used price lunacy

Was browsing E30s last night and came across a 325i Sport (pictured) priced at £25k. Is this now just a case of dealers/ sellers sticking a daft figure on relatively modern classics and hoping some muppet will be prepared to cough up?

You don't have to buy a BMW, of course. Plenty of great cars are available very cheaply. It's mainly choice BMWs and Porsches that seem to suffer from this.

### duncs5000

The Jap stuff seems to be going the same way as well, Duncs. Well, the interesting stuff.

Clio V6s have also gone daft. Even the Williams appears to now be on the rise (albeit still not quite daft yet).

# Swervin\_Mervin

For more than ten times that 325i Sport's asking price you can have the Rubystone 964 RS that's currently for sale. Makes the E30 seem reasonable!

### Jobbo

The thing is, where else are you going to find a 33k-mile 325i Sport? So for someone looking for one who has the cash, this is the Holy Grail. And in the seller's defence, at least it looks proper, unlike a lot of the stuff with inflated price tags just because of the badge/ model.

# Bryn\_P

Would I pay £25k for a 325i Sport? No. If I had enough money that £25k was pocket change and I wanted the best one I could find for my small private collection would I pay that for one? Quite possibly.

It wasn't that long ago that people thought you were mad to spend £10k on an E30 M3 when you could buy a decent Sport for half as much, or a tidy E46 M3 for the same. £10k today will barely get you a rusty rolling shell!

### integrale\_evo

If it is a genuine 33k and thus preserved, why not? A similar M3 from that era would cost at least double.

## razorsharp

I'd love to have my old Sport tucked in a garage somewhere. I couldn't see it, or any other, ever being worth £25k, though - even in as good shape as this one.

# Rich B

Just imagine how much it would be worth if they had photographed it in front of a white background.

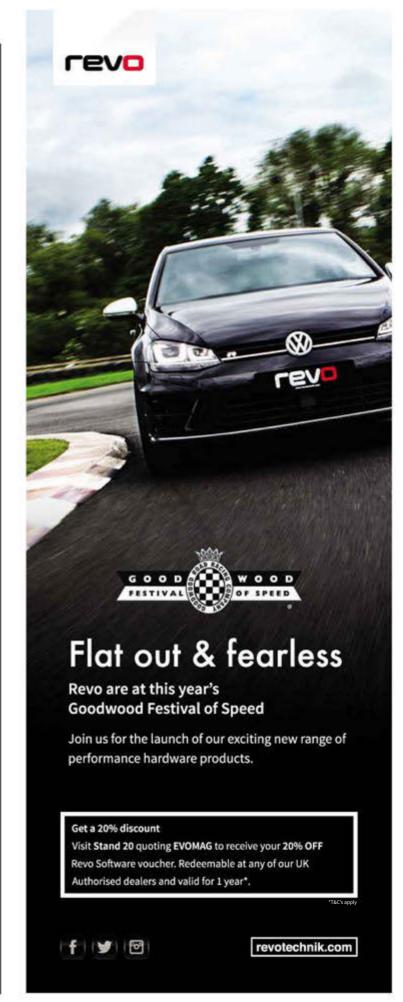
### Jimmy Choo



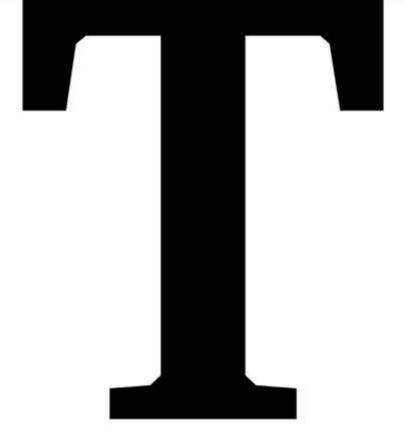
# Thread of the Month wins a Road Angel safety camera & blackspot alert device worth £159.99



The originator of the best **evo** forum thread wins a Road Angel Gem+. The Gem+ automatically updates its camera database as you drive and allows users to share the locations of 'live' camera vans.







# TRULY, I WISH YOU COULD SIT IN ON THE PRESS

briefing for the new 488 GTB. In fact I think Ferrari should livestream these things to give everyone a little glimpse into the work that goes into creating a supercar in 2015. The interplay of hardware and software, the detail aerodynamic work to create downforce whilst reducing drag, the way engine and chassis response times are measured in milliseconds... It's jaw-dropping, head-swimmingly complicated and, at times, hilarious. One of the slides concerning Side Slip Control 2 – a series of handwritten mathematical equations concerning yaw rate and roll equilibrium – has the room collapsed in laughter. It might as well be hieroglyphics. (Apparently the German contingent just furrowed their brows and earnestly took notes.) Anyway, the point is that I can't hope to impart the full scale of the ingenuity and hard work that has gone into this new chapter for Ferrari.

But then again, maybe I don't need to. Even the engineers, who I always think must believe we're barely qualified to pass judgement, are refreshingly open to our input and questions, and they all have the same message: 'Just drive it and you will see.' The graphs, sound wave pattern analysis and the equations are impressive on their own, but they're just a means to get to the driving experience that Ferrari wants to deliver. And it feels like they've genuinely gone the extra mile (or ten) with this car to ensure the new turbocharged V8 era starts with something extraordinary. There's no question that they're confident the 488 GTB delivers, but you can see writ large the weight of expectation created by the almost supernaturally talented 458 Speciale and its savagely sharp naturally aspirated 4.5-litre V8.

Right: the 488 GTB's twin turbos need feeding with cool air, and deep intakes gouged into the bodywork's flanks mark the car out from the 458 it replaces

# 'You can see writ large the weight of expectation created by the 458 Speciale'

The car that must not be mentioned – it starts with 'S' and I just mentioned it – is, of course, a bit of a curveball. Ferrari is clear that the 488 is a 458 Italia replacement and not a stripped-out, track-focused machine. Test driver Raffaele di Simone tells me that the 488 is deliberately a little more benign at the edge (i.e. it has a little more understeer) and a completely road-optimised car built for use every single day. In the next breath and with a glint in his eyes he goes on to say that the car's new Michelin Super Sport tyre is nearly on a par with the Cup 2 fitted to the Speciale for dry weather grip and that the 488 is half-a-second quicker around Fiorano than the, er, Speciale. And how many 458 Italia coupes did they sell once the Speciale had been introduced? Not many at all. So the *Macbeth* car is the benchmark. It has to be. And what an act to follow. Here goes...

### FERRARI IS A MASTER OF CREATING A BUZZ OF

excitement around a launch and no matter how many times you visit Maranello, trundle up to the gate of the Fiorano test track as it slides open and then slowly trickle through the narrow tunnel that leads you into the car park and paddock area, it sets off popping candy in the pit of your stomach. Two rows of 488 GTBs are waiting, all finished in the new Rosso Corsa metallic paint and sparkling in the morning sunshine. Even an orange, Swiss-registered LaFerrari parked nearby can barely pull the gaze of the collected journalists



and photographers from this mouth-watering sight. If this were a launch organised by a German marque we'd all have to queue up for keys, collect a route book with prescribed lunch stops and they'd probably even want to look at our driving licences (the temerity!). But it isn't. The keys are in the cars, everyone hops into a driver's seat and one-by-one the 488s slink quietly out into the wild.

'Quietly' is the appropriate word. The 488's new dry-sumped, 3902cc flat-plane-crank V8 with two IHI twin-scroll turbochargers starts with a bit of a boom, but the noise quickly dies away to a surprisingly nondescript and slightly rattly idle. A blip of revs and the noise hardens again, but the revs don't chase around the dial like they would in a 458. It doesn't so much whet the appetite as burst the bubble of anticipation with a flatulent *pop*. However, it wouldn't be wise to judge this engine just yet, as it offers quite staggering potential. Power is up from 562bhp in the Italia and 597bhp in the Speciale (both at 9000rpm) to 661bhp at 8000rpm, and torque jumps from 398lb ft at 6000rpm in both the 458s to as much as 560lb ft at 3000rpm. Like the California T, the 488 uses variable torque maps, so that crunching 560lb ft is only available in seventh gear. There is one map for first to third gears and then individual maps for gears four to seven, giving ever more low- and mid-range performance.

If the science and philosophy behind this 'variable torque management' sounds slightly contrived and artificial, the results it yields are astonishing. Ferrari claims 0-62mph in three seconds flat, 0-124mph in 8.3 seconds and a top speed of over 205mph. It's the 0-124mph figure that is truly startling, being three tenths quicker than the Lamborghini Aventador LP750-4 SV tested elsewhere in this issue, a tenth up on a McLaren 650S and – here's the real mind-bender – over two seconds up on the last turbocharged Ferrari of note, the mighty F40. The lap time at Fiorano is a 1min 23sec, the Speciale clocking a 1min 23.5sec and the Italia back on 1min 25sec. For reference, the Enzo's official time is 1min 24.9sec and the LaFerrari's 1min 19.7sec.

The F40? 1min 29.6sec. Such is the march of progress.

The gate slides open once again, only this time we've leaving Fiorano in the GTB and heading to the hills. Already the car feels all-new in some respects and spookily familiar in others. The ride is beautifully judged, the magnetic dampers having that remarkable knack of creating a feeling of tight control combined with a fluid, relaxed gait. The steering is very fast but there's more weight to it than you'd find in a 458 Italia and it seems more in tune with the car's responses. Like a Speciale's, in fact. Everything feels light and easy and the seven-speed 'F1' dual-clutch transmission shifts almost imperceptibly with Sport mode selected on the manettino.

Even as we amble through Maranello and the tangle of roundabouts and skinny roads that lead to the A1 towards Bologna, that engine makes its presence felt. It might not crackle with the same intent as the painfully loud Speciale's, but it really can flatten you into the seat-back if you hook fourth at 35mph and pin the throttle. It's a fairground-ride sensation that's familiar from the 650S and there's no question that the 488 GTB feels plain faster than the Italia and Speciale. At times it's almost uncomfortably fast. The quality of

Below: at 1475kg the 488 GTB is 10kg lighter than the 458 but 80kg heavier than a Speciale. Neither forebear develops anything like as much torque at low revs, however









the acceleration is different, too: I thought the torque management might hide the forced-induction traits but there's no doubt this thing is turbocharged - not because of any lag, but because the torque swells so quickly and then the engine blows out a high-pitched shriek if you find the room to explore the last 2000rpm or so.

So-guess what? - the 488 GTB is faster. Just how much faster away from the autostrada we'll find out soon enough. But it's also different in character. The throttle response is exceptional for any engine, turbo or not, but it is a little softer than that of the rampant old 4.5 V8. The gearshifts are incredibly fast but they too feel a little more cushioned, a fraction less intense. It's like the forces have all been dialled up by 25 per cent but the feeling of connection has slipped away. Maybe not by the same margin and I'm being ruthlessly critical here, of course. But the 488 GTB's new turbocharged engine has to be judged in the context of what's gone before - and the searing drivetrain of the Lamborghini Huracán, too. On first impressions it can't match the sheer excitement of either, despite its killer punch.

Soon the A1 is behind us and the Passo della Futa starts to heave and climb. I adore this road and I've experienced it in F12, Speciale, Huayra, LP550-2 and Aventador. I remember little snapshots: the Huayra lighting up its tyres over crests as the boost takes hold, the gorgeous manual shift of that most delicious of Gallardos, the everpresent oversteer in the rabid F12... Oh, and being a passenger in a spinning Murciélago LP640, but that's another story. The point is that the best cars turn this incredible puzzle of crests, frost-shattered surfaces, blind hairpins and wickedly tightening sweepers into something seamless and breathtaking. It should be the perfect setting for the GTB to elbow its way to the top of my Futa fantasies.

In anticipation, the GTB is primed in 'CT Off' mode (disabling the traction control and allowing that Side Slip Control 2 to work at its

# 'There's no doubt this thing is turbocharged, because the torque swells so quickly'

optimum) and with the dampers in the more relaxed 'bumpy road' mode. SSC was the subject of numerous unfathomable slides in the presentation. As in the Speciale, it takes into account speed, steering angle and various other factors to determine a 'target' slip angle that will balance the car in a sweet spot of lateral grip and forward thrust. By manipulating the E-Diff and stability control it then helps to keep you on that fine line. So, for example, if you're understeering into a corner, the E-Diff will unlock to create some yaw to rebalance the car, or if you're oversteering too much the E-Diff will lock tight and the ESC will gradually bleed off some power.

SSC2 also now utilises the magnetic dampers to help curtail underand oversteer. So say you're wildly oversteering (well done), the dampers will loosen off at the rear to enhance traction and stiffen at the front to reduce front-end grip. Even with ESC fully disabled the E-Diff and dampers still have this 'target' in sight and work to try to keep you close to it. It's ingenious. Or it could be a lie, because it's almost impossible to detect it working in CT Off and ESC off modes.









# Above and far left:

turbocharged engine develops peak power at 8000rpm and has a notable absence of turbo lag. **Left:** seven-speed dual-clutch transmission helps the GTB dispatch 0-62mph in a Porsche Turbo S-beating 3.0sec

What you feel is best described simply as 'balance'. The 488 is possessed of gorgeous balance, despite its terrifying onslaught of power. This car is so fast that soon any thoughts of the throttle response being not quite as sharp as before are laughable. It just rips over and over up into the 8000rpm limiter, and due to the torque management tactics power seems to grow in intensity rather than tail off as you click for another gear. That in itself is a new thrill that the 458 – in any iteration – couldn't hope to match. Halfway along our chosen section of the Futa I feel almost drunk on the performance.

How it uses that performance is what counts, of course. Those new Michelin Super Sports are superb and traction feels a step up from the Speciale. In fact that's not entirely true. It feels very similar to the Speciale despite having much more torque with which to cope. The upshot is that you can choose to drive the car sensibly and get most of the torque down very cleanly, or you can show more aggression and the car responds in kind. The engine can always have the upper hand in the power-to-grip ratio if you so choose, and that means you can really indulge in the 488's broad operating window. And it gives you so much information to do so – both from the steering and through the seat.

'Halfway along our chosen section of the Futa I feel almost drunk on the performance'

**Below:** on the Futa pass the 488 GTB is almost too fast, and raises questions over the evolution of supercars



So you know implicitly when the front tyres are starting to lose grip and hence the small, stable angle of understeer that follows feels entirely natural. Now you can accurately unleash the engine's massive power to bring the car back to neutral and then lean a bit further than seems sensible on the rear tyres and let the SSC2 smooth-off your excesses. You'll still need the occasional little steering correction, but again they feel natural and easy. For such a heroically fast car the 488 never seems to make you hurry.

It takes a while to process just what the 488 GTB can do and discern whether that makes it a more thrilling car than the 458 Italia and Speciale. Certainly it's faster across the ground and it has all of their magical agility and poise. In fact in some ways the 488 melds the intuitive adjustability and involvement of those cars and adds the time-shrinking performance that has always defined the startlingly effective McLaren 650S. But the bigger question is whether faster is better. The Speciale is already so capable that to drive it as fast as it will go on the road is impossible. So what good is more traction, more torque, more accessibility?

Of course, every new generation of performance car ramps up power and grip, so this question could be legitimately levelled at anything from a new Golf GTI to the upcoming Veyron replacement. Instead, maybe it's better to ask what has been sacrificed to get to this next level of potential and does it mean that the car is less exciting at the sorts of speeds that are attainable on the road? It would be harsh to say that the 488 is anything other than a thrilling, sensory overload, but like the 650S, this Ferrari only fully reveals its fiery side when you're closing in on the speed of sound. That drivetrain is devastating but the noise only ramps up when it hisses between 6000 and 8000rpm, and even then it's easy to run hard into the limiter because the sound doesn't signal that you *really* need an upshift.

By the time I stop at our meeting point and wait for Dean Smith to catch up in the photography car, the 488 has blown my mind but not quite made my heart soar. That might sound ludicrous and of course I'm being overly dramatic, but the very best cars hook you so deeply into the experience that you don't think about noise and throttle response and under- or oversteer. The very act of driving just washes over you and you react and soon pre-empt the car's behaviour until you're completely involved and in tune with what's unfolding. You simply exist in a little bubble of symbiotic fury and fun and nothing else matters. The 488 has given me moments like that but, so far at



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least, they haven't been sustained. It's deeply impressive, technically brilliant, but as immersive and exciting as the Speciale? Not quite.

The next few hours can't shake that feeling. There are moments of pure genius and I think the steering and chassis are simply fabulous. There is a shade more understeer than you'd find in a Speciale and such is the torque that oversteer can come in spikes if you don't finesse your throttle inputs, but it's still the adjustability that sets the Ferrari apart from the 650S and Huracán. Each of these supercars offers its own thrill, but the super-fluid, super-clinical McLaren and the locked-down Lamborghini never allow the driver into the experience as fully as the 488 GTB does. You can use CT Off mode to learn to trust the car and to feel what happens when you give the rear tyres everything the engine has got, then revel in the chassis' immense composure beyond the limit with the odd foray into ESC Off mode. Very few cars allow you to feel the edge of grip so tangibly and then play around that edge with such freedom.

#### WE'RE LATE FOR OUR SLOT AT FIORANO AND SO MY

last couple of hours in the 488 are a mad dash back down the Futa to the A1, some very Italianate driving on the autostrada and then a few laps of Fiorano before the circuit shuts. It's mighty on the Futa, composed but allowing me to chase away understeer on the throttle, fluid and coursing with feedback. On the A1 it feels almost comically muscular and searingly fast. It's quiet and comfortable, too. You could cover long distances in this car with consummate ease. Ironically the CO2-friendly engine really does suck in the fuel when you're using the performance, though. We fill it up twice in our day with the car.

At Fiorano the 488 is supreme. In fact it feels better than it has all day. The performance remains incredible and when you're always near the limits the chassis is never shocked by a sudden rush of torque, so the balance is stunningly easy to manipulate. The brakes have superb feel but as on the road it's easy to out-brake yourself, such are the speeds between corners. In fact the car just feels light, agile, stable and indulgent. I begin to doubt my earlier reservations...

Was I pre-progammed to think the turbocharged engine couldn't be as sharp as the pure, naturally aspirated V8. Blinded by some sort of prejudice? Perhaps, but I don't think so. The simple facts are that the new engine gives you more of what you can't use (outright power) and less of everything that can make any journey feel special (immediacy of throttle response, noise and that feral rush to 9000rpm). It is a staggeringly competent car in every respect and Ferrari has once again created a new benchmark for its class in so many ways, but somewhere amongst the graphs and the figures and the equations, a little heart and excitement has leaked away.

'Such is the torque that oversteer can come in spikes if you don't finesse throttle inputs'



## **PUSHING THE ENVELOPE**

The 488 GTB's development was all about pushing beyond Ferrari's natural evolutionary curve in terms of power and aerodynamics.

Ferrari says that the car's aero efficiency is such that if you plot where it sits on the previous trend line that joins 360 Modena, F430 and 458 Italia, the 488 shouldn't have arrived until 2021. There's a new underbody with curved vortex generators, active flaps on the rear diffuser that stall air to reduce drag in a straight line, a blown rear spoiler and a 'base bleed' that ingests air through the top section of those huge side intakes and then blows it out through the vortex clinging to the rear of the car, also to make it more slippery. The end result is 50 per cent more downforce than a 458 Italia but less drag.

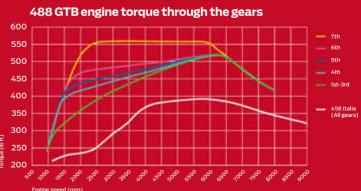
Of course, it's the engine that makes a more tangible impression and here again the evolution is vastly accelerated. The direct injection 3902cc V8 has a compression ratio of 9.4:1 and uses two IHI twin-scroll turbochargers with ballbearing shafts that reduce friction by 30 per cent. The compressor wheels are titanium aluminide, a material that has

strong heat resistance and is lightweight, ensuring a faster spool-up speed by 50 per cent compared to Inconel and, according to Ferrari, zero lag. It rates the engine response time at 0.8 seconds at 2000rpm in third gear.

The Italia's naturally aspirated V8 responds faster still, at 0.6 seconds, but thereafter the 488 delivers vastly more longitudinal acceleration – 20-25 per cent more in the lower gears, 30 per cent more in fifth and sixth and 40 per cent more in seventh. A mysterious 'competitor' is rated at a two-second response time by Ferrari's measurements. In other words, the 488 GTB would be on the limiter before the other car responds.

The active torque management has many benefits according to Ferrari. First is that it gives the engine an exciting delivery that builds rapidly towards peak power rather than giving a huge chunk of low-end torque and reaching an early plateau. That also benefits traction and allows for shorter gearing to be used to further enhance excitement. At every turn the engine team wanted to create close-to-instant response with the character and noise of a true Ferrari.









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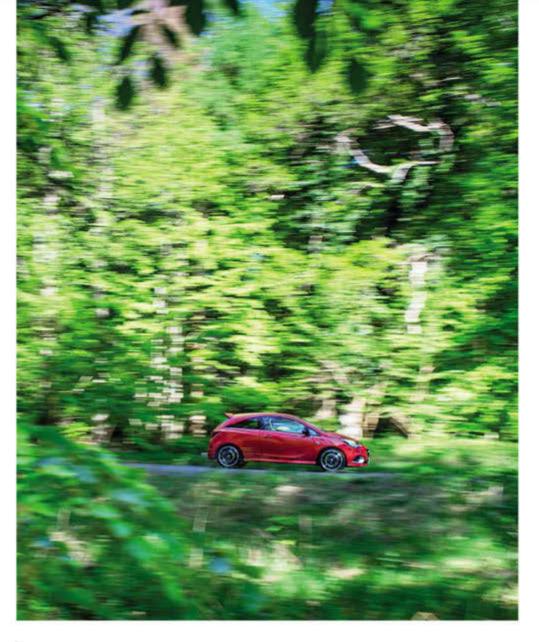
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**5.40AM** Depart Aldeburgh



**T 5.02AM THE SUN EMERGES FROM AN** eerily calm North Sea, growing from tiny radiant

jewel to perfectly formed orb. For ten minutes or so, as **evo** photographer Aston Parrott snaps away, we watch in silence as the new day dawns. This will be our last peaceful moment between now and 9.04pm when, at the day's end, the sun will set in the west.

We've given ourselves a full spring day to get from here at Aldeburgh on the Suffolk coast to the vast expanse of Porthmadog beach in north Wales. If all we had to do today was drive we could manage that three times over, but there's a great deal to be done

along the way. We'll be stopping off at five locations on an indirect route; five quiet, secluded spots where we can really drive our six assembled hot hatches and photograph them for this story. Knowing how long it takes to shoot a big magazine feature and co-ordinate a bunch of easily distracted motoring journalists, I'm certain time is going to be tight, but if we work quickly we'll make it to Porthmadog for sunset. That's 16 hours from now. That's 16 hours to find the best small hot hatch on sale.

## WE DON'T SEEM TO GO MORE THAN A

dozen tides without heaping praise on the Ford Fiesta ST. This particular Spirit Blue car, which we've run on our Fast Fleet for the past year, feels fitter than ever since it was upgraded with the official Mountune kit, which lifts peak power from 179bhp to 212bhp for an additional cost of £599.

The Ford has a score to settle. When it met Peugeot's 208 GTI 30th Anniversary on road and track earlier in the year (**evo** 207), it came away less Spirit Blue and more black and blue. The Peugeot's slightly wild character was enough for it to displace the ST as our small hot hatch of choice, but Ford sympathisers will hope that the engine



7.05AM Arrive at Thetford Forest

'We've got 16 hours to find the best small hot hatch on sale'

upgrade and a more varied road route – one that does without any circuit activity - will be enough to turn the tables back in favour of the Blue Oval.

The Audi S1, another of our daily rides, has been winning the team over since it arrived on the Fast Fleet back in issue 205. It brings a premium edge to this sector, but also a truly entertaining driving experience and urgent straight-line performance.

Those three cars are familiar, but the remaining trio is made of up new arrivals: the Mini John Cooper Works (a car that, on the strength of the previous model, we're excited to try for the first time here), VW Polo GTI and Vauxhall Corsa VXR. They will all have their work cut out to mix it with the three we already know and love - indeed, one of them won't last very long at all - but if any should prove worthy of this exalted company it can be considered a hot hatch of the highest order.

So those are the six challengers. Just one of them, though, will make it to Porthmadog. As we

depart each of our five locations along the route, our least favourite car, determined by a judges' vote, will be sent home. The knockout process will separate the pretenders from the contenders, refining our group from six hopefuls in the east to a single winner in the west.

With the sun now well clear of the horizon and the clock ticking along, we head for our first location. Before this morning the only car I hadn't sampled was the Polo GTI, so I've chosen it for the opening leg. Of course, what I'm hoping of the Polo is that it's a downsized Golf GTI, a car that for the last three generations has combined sophisticated but engaging fast road manners with handsome styling and effortless everyday appeal.

The Polo is powered by a turbocharged 1.8-litre engine, which is good for 189bhp and, with the manual gearbox, as fitted here, 236lb ft of torque. VW claims 6.7sec to 62mph and 146mph flat-out, which should give the Polo enough raw pace to







**7.45AM**Polo GTI is first to be eliminated

**Top:** few hot hatches managed to match the visual aggression of the previous Corsa VXR, and it's the same story with the new car. **Above:** Polo GTI tested with the manual 'box, which permits an extra 52lb ft of torque over the DSG transmission. **Right:** test Corsa is equipped with the optional Performance Pack, which includes a tightly wound limited-slio differential

keep up with the group. Priced from £18,850 it's one of the cheapest cars here, but there is an impression of quality and solidity in the cabin that some of the others can't match.

A mile or so out of Aldeburgh the road begins to flow and the convoy rolls along, our pace increasing with every mile as we shake off the 3.30am alarm call. The GTI doesn't want for straight-line performance, but the engine feels strangled at the top end, having done its best work in the mid-range. It's the first clue that this isn't one of those hot hatches that demands to be thrashed. Then you launch the thing into a corner and realise that the front axle doesn't find the same stubborn grip as some of the others here. A notch or two back from front-end push there isn't a great deal of playfulness in the chassis, either, and the damping lacks the kind of quality that points to proper performance car breeding.

If not being fun is a mortal sin for a hot hatch, the Polo could be on its way to meet Hades. The narrow, hedgerow-lined roads that run between Aldeburgh and our first location, Thetford Forest, are unremarkable at best, but they're exactly the kinds of roads that thread themselves across

Britain, exactly the sort of ground where a hot hatch should shine. For all its performance and cabin quality, the Polo feels dull. Halfway to Thetford Forest I hand the car over to contributing editor David Vivian, keen to get his ever-insightful thoughts on the little GTI.

'Good powertrain, smooth and brawny,' he says as we regroup in the forest. 'The chassis is completely benign – you'd have to fall asleep to have an off. In theory it's a slightly smaller, slightly less powerful Golf GTI, but in reality it's a slightly faster Polo.'

Managing editor Stuart Gallagher has nothing more favourable to say about it, concluding that it's 'a lukewarm hot hatch and a disappointing GTI', so by unanimous vote it becomes the first car to fall. We spend an hour or so bagging a few photographs among the verdant trees and thrashing the remaining contenders through the forest, each of us building our own ideas as to which will join the Polo for an early bath.

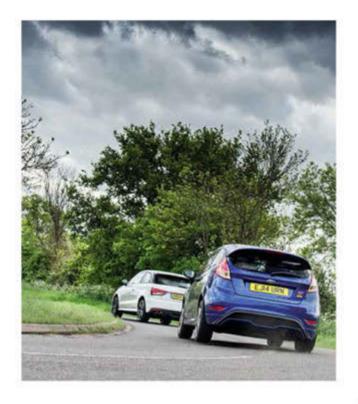
And then there were five. The second leg of our journey is mostly dual carriageway, so we cover the ground as quickly as we can – stopping briefly for a much needed bacon roll and gallons of builder's tea – to reach some hallowed road testing ground. Car magazines have been using the B660 in Cambridgeshire for decades, partly, it must be said, for convenience, but also because it really is an archetypal slice of British B-road.

In a bid to restore my faith in the modern hot hatch, I've sat myself in the Fiesta ST Mountune – which, like the Polo, is also relatively inexpensive, priced at £18,144. Despite the tedious run from Thetford to our spot on the B660, I'm reminded why we love the ST so much. It's such an immediate machine you need no time at all to realise that its chassis is sweetly balanced and the major controls are perfectly matched in their weighting and rate of response. We'll not be eliminating the superb little Ford any time soon.

So brilliantly executed is the ST it almost seems unfair to jump directly from it into the Mini, but to prove its worth the JCW will have to stand toe-to-toe with the very best, just as the Corsa VXR will. As the mid-morning sun begins to warm the tarmac, I settle into the Mini's cabin, which, to my mind, has taken the Toytown aesthetic a step too far in its third iteration. The seat also feels an inch or so too high in its lowest position and the car as a whole feels swollen and bigger than before. The previous versions were so intimate and cosy inside, but this latest model feels as though it belongs to the segment above by comparison.

The earlier Cooper S and John Cooper Works





Right: Fiesta ST does without a trick differential, but its mobile chassis and obedient controls make it a joy to drive on the limit. Far right: JCW struggles on less than impressive Pirelli tyres; it could prove brilliant on more performance-orientated rubber. Below: Mini's driving position is a little high, while the auto 'box seems out of place

models were such brilliant little hot hatches that I can't help but expect a great deal of this new car. I adored the previous model for taking the base car's cutesy image and making it of secondary importance to a thrilling driving experience - for the way in which it humbled anybody who dared write it off based on the styling alone. With this third-generation model having taken the kitsch factor to the nth degree, I suppose that becomes an ever more difficult task, but the spec sheet promises much - with 228bhp this £23,050 JCW is the most powerful factory Mini to date. The chassis also gets specific suspension components and chunky Brembo brakes, but less promising are the optional six-speed automatic gearbox and Pirelli Cinturato P7 run-flat tyres.

I just can't countenance an automatic gearbox in a hot hatch of this size – bigger hatches with self-shifters are less of a concern for some reason – and that rubber isn't ultra high performance, but instead a sort of performance all-rounder. These two points are concerning because there is so much potential in the base Cooper S. Even though the latest version has lost a fraction of the previous generations' purity and immediacy, the chassis

9.50AM
Five cars arrive at the B660





remains tautly controlled, supremely agile and, best of all, brilliantly adjustable.

So it's with a conflicted sense of excitement and trepidation that I point the JCW's rounded snout down the B660 for my first proper run in it. The 2-litre turbo engine delivers its peak torque output of 236lb ft from just 1250rpm, so the JCW really does haul itself down the road at a good old lick. Free of lag and snorting through a sports exhaust, the JCW has one of the most effective engines of the lot, and it must be said the auto 'box does work very well. It isn't a twin-clutch unit, but the shift speeds are rapid and the steering-wheel-mounted paddles return faithful shifts, both up and down. Objectively there's nothing really wrong with this gearbox, but a small hot hatch should deliver a frantic, involving driving experience and ditching the stick and clutch pedal just gnaws away at that sense of engagement. I don't doubt a manual car would be more fun and we'll get to drive one soon.

After a few runs back and forth along the rollicking B660 I turn back towards our meeting point, feeling disappointed. With the Corsa VXR parked up in the lay-by I shut the JCW down and switch from one British-built car to another, hoping the little Vauxhall will fire me up again. Fifteen minutes later I'm wondering if the Mini

might be on its way back to Oxford before the Corsa leaves for Luton.

Something has been lost from the Mini JCW. That slightly raised seating position and those squidgy tyres give an impression of the centre of gravity being around your shoulders rather than your hips and of the tracks being narrow. Feeling perched on top of the car, you turn it into a corner, wince at the slight shortfall in front axle grip, feel the body roll and then the tyres - which are howling by now - collapse onto their sidewalls. You'll then sense the rear axle take on some attitude, so you unwind a little steering lock as you wonder if the car is about to rotate itself. It all happens so suddenly, which makes the car feel nervous and unstable. At higher speeds that can actually become quite alarming, so your confidence in the car is knocked and you instinctively wind yourself down from attack mode to a cruise.

I understand what Mini has tried to do - it has under-tyred the car so that it feels as though it's wandering around the edge of grip at sane speeds, just as Toyota did with the GT86. Does that give it a broader appeal? Perhaps, but to those of us who really care about driving it makes the car immeasurably less satisfying than it would be on a proper ultra high performance tyre, such as 'Free of lag and snorting through a sports exhaust, the JCW really does haul itself down the road at a good lick'

the Michelin Pilot Super Sports fitted to the 208 GTI. On a set of sticky rubber the JCW would, I'm certain, be a car that you could really take by the scruff and throw down a road, it goading you into committing ever harder to each corner in the manner that truly great hot hatches do.

What's frustrating is that the JCW clearly has a supreme chassis beneath its bodywork. It's agile, alert and adjustable, the steering has a natural rate of response, and the pivot point is still somewhere around the gearlever. But the tyres mean you just can't exploit all of that brilliance. The previous JCW was a proper hot hatch, but this latest version, on those Cinturato tyres, is no more than an approximation of one.

The Corsa approaches the hot hatch discipline from an opposing angle. The base car is tepid and uninspiring, but the VXR is equipped with some serious hardware. Specified with the Performance Pack—which lifts the price from £17,995 to £20,395 and adds a Drexler limited-slip differential, trick Koni dampers and the Super Sport rubber I so craved on the Mini JCW – the 202bhp Corsa VXR has quite an arsenal at its disposal.

Like many of its rivals, the Corsa sits you just a little too high – although, if memory serves, its seating position is better than in the model it replaces – and the gearshift, though improved, is still a touch slack. After a run to the end of the B660 and back I've come to a solid conclusion – a limited-slip differential is an essential part of the hot hatch anatomy. Some will find the torque steer effect in the wet and the slight wandering sensation across a rutted road surface tiring, but I reckon it's a small price to pay for the way in which the VXR hauls itself out of corners as though being

pulled through by a retracting bungee cord. It's as satisfying as a rear-wheel-drive car trimming its line ever so slightly under power, and it also gives the VXR enormous point-to-point pace because you can reapply the power so early in the corner.

The Michelin tyres endow the Corsa with tremendous grip, but the steering has a very strong self-centring effect, which can make it tricky to guide the car smoothly. The chassis also still feels bouncy and a little unsettled over uneven surfaces, despite those Koni dampers. The VXR is flawed in dynamic terms, but it absolutely *is* one of those hot hatches that begs to be thrashed and wrung out. It's a trick both the Polo GTI and JCW suffer for not pulling off, and for my money that means the Mini should be the second car to depart.

But until my dictatorship is officially recognised, these things will be decided by a vote, and both Viv and Stuart choose to dismiss the Corsa ahead of the Mini. 'It's not a bad thing to drive,' says Viv of the Corsa, reluctantly. 'Fast, almost absurdly grippy and, like the Pug, in possession of an aggressive mechanical diff and sticky tyres which combine to very good effect in the dry. It's a wannabe 208 GTI 30th, without the depth of talent.'

'There are times when the VXR feels like a genuine contender,' adds Stuart, 'but this group is too tightly contested for it to go any further.'

So the Corsa goes home while the Mini is handed a lifeline. It joins the remaining three for the long run from the B660 to our third location, the picturesque Cotswold Hills.

Throughout the day the team has been excitedly trading tales of the rapid little Peugeot. For many of them this has been their first opportunity to sample the £21,995 30th Anniversary's measured

Below: at nearly £25,000 the Audi is comfortably the most expensive car here – something that shows both in cabin quality and on the spec sheet. Right: with four-wheel-drive and a JCW-matching 228bhp, nothing can live with the SI in these conditions

11.00AM Corsa VXR is out



'In terms of sheer cross-country pace, the four-wheel-drive S1 has everything else covered'

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aggression and lively chassis balance, and to remind myself just why I placed it ahead of the Fiesta ST a few months back I take its wheel for the first half of our jaunt to the Cotswolds.

It doesn't have the instantaneous charm of the ST, partly because the steering wheel is unusually small and the control weights just a little disjointed, but with the miles comes familiarity, and then the realisation that this is truly one of the most exciting hot hatches currently on sale. The sheer grip of the front axle, the agility, the excitability of the rear axle, the scrabbling limited-slip differential – the 208 GTI 30th Anniversary is fun, raw and heroically fast.

The Cotswold Hills still a decent jaunt away, I give up the Peugeot's slightly under-supported driver's seat and settle into the Audi. I don't doubt

that a great many buyers would be seduced at once by the S1's interior, which simply murders the Fiesta and Corsa cabins for build quality. The infotainment system looks a generation old, but otherwise it all feels solid and built to last, which you'd very reasonably expect of a £24,900 car.

Two hours after leaving the B660, having stopped for lunch, we reach the northern edge of the Cotswolds. The clouds are gathering overhead now but there's still enough sunshine to pick out the rolling green beauty of this corner of Gloucestershire and the sandy yellow brickwork of the houses that dot the landscape. These roads are far from deserted and they're generally unsighted, but our run through the hills inspires a realisation that hot hatches do not need far-flung locations in which to shine. Indeed, they are so appealing

1.00PM
Four cars reach the Cotswold Hills



## **AUDI**

S1

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo Power 228bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 273lb ft @ 1600-3000rpm

Weight 1315kg

Power-to-weight 176bhp/ton 0-62mph 5.8sec (claimed) Top speed 155mph (limited) Basic price £24,900

**evo** rating: ★★★★

### **FORD** FIESTA ST MOUNTUNE

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1591cc, turbo Power 212bhp @ 6000rpm **Torque** 236lb ft @ 3000rpm Weight 1088kg Power-to-weight 198bhp/ton **0-62mph** 6.4sec (claimed) Top speed 140mph (estimated) Basic price £18,144

**evo** rating: \*\*\*

### MINI JOHN COOPER WORKS

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1998cc, turbo Power 228bhp @ 5200-6000rpm **Torque** 236lb ft @ 1250-4800rpm Weight 1200kg

Power-to-weight 193bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.1sec (claimed) Top speed 153mph (claimed) Basic price £23,050

**evo** rating: ★★★★

## **PEUGEOT** 208 GTI 30TH

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbo Power 205bhp @ 5800rpm Torque 221lb ft @ 1750rpm Weight 1185kg Power-to-weight 176bhp/ton 0-62mph 6.sec (claimed) Top speed 143mph (claimed) Basic price £21,995

**evo** rating: \*\*\*

## VAUXHALL

CORSA VXR PERF. PACK

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1598cc, turbo Power 202bhp @ 5800rpm Torque 206lb ft @ 1900-5800rpm Weight 1278kg Power-to-weight 161bhp/ton

**0-62mph** 6.5sec (claimed) **Top speed** 143mph (claimed) Basic price £20,395

**evo** rating: \*\*\*

## **VOLKSWAGEN**

POLO GTI

Power 189bhp @ 4200rpm Torque 236lb ft @ 1450-4200rpm Weight 1280kg Power-to-weight 150bhp/ton **0-62mph** 6.7sec (claimed) Top speed 146mph (limited) Basic price £18,850

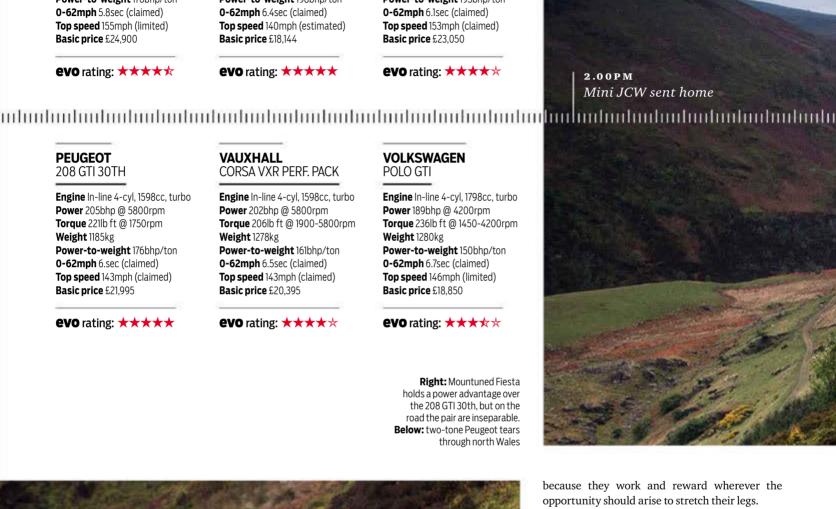
Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1798cc, turbo

**evo** rating: ★★★★★

holds a power advantage over **Below:** two-tone Peugeot tears







opportunity should arise to stretch their legs.

I try the Mini JCW one more time, just to see if I've been unduly critical. With a few more miles at the wheel I realise that the chassis has enough natural balance that you can drive through the tyres' lack of outright grip, letting the car settle into a very gentle, almost imperceptible fourwheel drift from entry to apex. My harsh opinion of the car softens a touch with this discovery, but a few miles further down the road I find myself wishing, once more, for more precision in the tyres and more outright grip.

I return to the group and share my thoughts with Viv. To my relief he agrees with every word I've said, adding, 'I'm not a fan of the direction Mini has taken the new JCW. I would have liked something a bit leaner and meaner with a manual 'box and a decent set of tyres. The car's essentially fine dynamic DNA still manages to shine through, though. It could be tidier, but the chassis still has



that super-nimble turn-in and agility.'

Stuart is in agreement, too. 'There is a worry that with each generation the Mini gets more grown up and loses that enthusiast appeal that we couldn't get enough of when it was new.'

The Mini's time with us at an end, we head with the three remaining cars on to the fourth location.

The Shropshire Hills look like a scoop of the Scottish Highlands dropped onto the English/ Welsh border. The roads around the Long Mynd moorland are single-width and fiendishly bumpy, but on a clear day the views are spectacular. Sadly, by the time we reach the summit the clouds have gathered into a thick blanket and rain is falling hard, so we agree not to hang around too long before continuing into Wales.

The wet weather might have given the S1 a chance to break into the last two, but it becomes the fourth car to fall. Along with having perhaps the most showroom appeal of all six contenders, the S1 delivers the biggest straight-line punch

thanks to its four-wheel-drive traction, tightly stacked gearing and thumping 273lb ft of torque. In terms of sheer cross-country pace, the 228bhp S1 has everything else covered, particularly in these wet conditions. It also feels neatly balanced when cornering, rather than resolutely front heavy, and the suspension gives good control and agility coupled with a cushioned pliancy.

'The baby Audi nearly threatens for top spot,' says Stuart. 'It's a car that encourages you to push and explore the limits. But with every drive of its rivals I can see where the S1 loses ground. Its steering isn't as direct and when you want some adjustability it only offers a small amount. Ultimately it loses out to two very talented superminis.'

Six took the start, now the final two remain. Nose-to-tail, the Fiesta ST and 208 GTI run at speed through the heart of Wales, charging towards our final test location on the very eastern edge of Snowdonia. The B4391 gets going the 'The Ford and the Peugeot ride with a certain tautness, but both become pliant with speed'

moment it climbs out of Pencraig and for the first mile or so it clings to a rock face with a tumbling drop to one side, like a shot of Rallye Monte Carlo. As the landscape levels out, the road opens a little and flows quickly over the moors, fast corners diving into second-gear hairpins.

Both the Ford and the Peugeot ride with a certain tautness, but they both, too, become pliant at speed, smothering bumps and intrusions with the damping quality of much more expensive cars. They each have a level of adjustability on a closed throttle that makes them superbly malleable on the road and each feels quick through their midranges and into the upper reaches of their rev bands. The Fiesta has the better seating position and gearshift; the 208 the stronger traction and tighter roll-resistance.

"The Peugeot is a pretty serious piece of kit with the most uncompromisingly firm ride," offers Viv. 'It has just enough torque-steer to make you feel properly involved. The steering's strong castor action feels a bit "spring-centred" synthetic and means, along with the torque effects, you really have to steer the car. But it's one that amply rewards commitment, tilting you towards a full-on groove in which poke, purchase and body control align in a really satisfying way. If you're looking for a narrow band of supreme ability, the Pug nails it. It's the one that feels most on it.'

As we struggle to separate one from the other, Stuart says of the Fiesta: 'It has always been a belting drive: alive, alert, involving and exciting. But the Mountune upgrade package has added an extra ten per cent. The engine revs more sweetly and freely; you never find yourself dropping off the power curve and it also sounds more characterful.'

If this were a modern school sports day, both cars would leave with a gold medal and a pat on the back, but there can only be one winner. All three judges agree that if there had been a track element the outcome would probably have been a repeat of that first encounter, but the longer and more varied road route – as well as that engine upgrade – have turned the tables back in the Fiesta's favour. The 208 GTI 30th falls at the final hurdle and watches the Spirit Blue Ford disappear over the hill on its triumphant drive to Porthmadog.

I just love the ST's sense of balance, the way it rotates right around its centre-point the moment you turn into a corner. It feels so fluid and so supple at speed while being so tautly controlled, and the steering is perfectly accurate and wonderfully communicative. With the sun falling towards the Irish Sea and the clouds drifting away, I drop out of Snowdonia national park and towards the coast.

I make it to the beach with half an hour to spare. It's just enough time to relax after a frantic 16 hours and reflect on an intriguing group test. The sun sets in the background, but the real star is just in front of me.

With thanks to The Crown Hotel, Southwold.

**6.50PM**Final duel along the B4391

**8.30PM**Winner reaches Porthmadog





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PHOTOGRAPHY by DEAN SMITH

So convincing is the 'standard'
991 GT3 as a foad-going race car
that it's difficult to imagine where
Porsche might improve the recipe.
With the new GT3 RS it has done
just that, however, by applying more
motorsport genetics than ever before

# KILLS BUGS FASTER



Right: air outlets in front wings reduce lift, which means that more downforce can be applied at the rear. Below right: RS's 4-litre engine spins to 8800rpm, compared to the GT3's 9000rpm. Bottom right: Porsche crest is a sticker because the carbon bonnet can't be drilled into; it also saves a few grams...



out here. Another yellow smear appears on the glass, glistening briefly before drying opaque in the same rushing slipstream that brought the insect to its early demise. The collection of entomological streaks looks almost artistic in the beautiful evening sun.

*BAP.* The needle drops. The sound, that wonderful sound, deepens a little but the onrush is relentless. A full-throttle PDK upshift breaks the RS's stride no more than the insect impact. A right-hander approaches and although earlier in the day instinct would have told me to brake back when the insect hit, I know that it's only now that I need to stand hard on the pedal, tap twice on the left-hand paddle and turn in.

The nose of the RS reacts instantly. Inside, I can feel the outside of my leg and shoulder pressing into the seat, squeezing muscle into Alcantaraclad carbon as the lateral G ramps up. Yet I could have carried *more* speed. A fast, well-sighted left follows. Don't lift. Sweep across the road using all of the empty tarmac. A small bump, but the car is locked down, utterly stable. Just at the apex the weighting at the wheel tells you the front tyres are scrubbing a fraction. Now we're getting somewhere. Keep accelerating, release the small amount of lock, enjoy the howl, enjoy the upshifts. *THUD*.

#### OF ALL THE CARS LAUNCHED THIS

year, the new Porsche 911 GT3 RS has arguably the greatest weight of expectation resting on its shoulders. Such is the illustrious history of the Rennsport badge, or sticker in this case, that despite my best efforts to think of a bad RS, or even a mildly disappointing one, I'm not sure such a thing exists (indignant corrections on a postcard please). But the 991-generation of 911 has been fraught with new and not always welcome introductions: electric power-assisted







steering, the seven-speed manual, Porsche Dynamic Chassis Control and PDK-only in a GT3 – all have been openly criticised to some degree both in these pages and elsewhere. I don't think anyone doubts that the new RS will 'do the numbers' and be phenomenally fast, but delivering on an empirical level and delivering on an emotional level are two different things.

Certainly the first time I get into the new RS, the evening before we're due to drive, the resulting emotions are something of a mixed bag. I love the look and feel of the fixed-back buckets inspired by those in the 918 Spyder. Likewise, I'm bewitched by the way that the open spokes on the smaller, 360mm steering wheel from the 918 reveal the beautiful silver spars of the paddles behind. Little familiar details are still there, like the fabric door-pulls and bigger details like the half cage behind the

seats. Yet in spite of this it still feels remarkably civilised. Things that used to be no-cost options, such as air conditioning and a radio, now come as standard. They can of course be deleted, but the change in emphasis from the stripped-out standard is interesting and is perhaps a result of the number of miles that Porsche has found a lot of 991 GT3 owners are covering. In some specs, could this possibly be the first everyday RS?

Since its unveiling at the Geneva motor show in March, you have no doubt committed to memory such figures as 493bhp, 339lb ft, 3.3 seconds and 193mph, while noting that those first two are an exact match for the increasingly iconic 997 RS 4.0. But at the launch the engineers tend to let slip a few more juicy details about a car, adding to and then going beyond the bare figures. Take the weight saving, for example. We know that at 1420kg the RS

'PREUNINGER RECOUNTS THE RS'S STABILITY THROUGH A SET OF 170MPH SWEEPERS...'



weighs 10kg less than a standard GT3, despite employing the wider and therefore heavier Turbo body. But I love some of the extremes that the engineers go to in order to save the weight. Some things are relatively easy wins, such as the polycarbonate windows (3.5kg saved) and even the carbon front wings (2.2kg saved). But then there are more marginal gains that take rather more effort. The roof, for example, is made of magnesium just 1mm thick, saving 1.1kg (or 30 per cent) compared to an aluminium roof and 800g compared to a carbon one. The tricky thing is that there's only one place in the world capable of cutting the magnesium and there is only one (different) place in the world capable of shaping it, so the roof starts life in South Korea, travels to Canada, then goes to the USA before finally arriving in Stuttgart. The rear skirt is also a first, being made of a newly

Porsche-patented type of polyurethane with a filling material that is particularly light.

Wandering around the static RS there is a brooding feeling of intimidation. It looks extremely serious. A standard GT3 parked up nearby suddenly seems rather under-wheeled, which is not something I've ever thought before. The fairly extreme aero is perhaps the main reason for the sense that this might all be a bit much. Those beautiful vents over the front wheels are the key. Increasing rear downforce has never been a problem for Porsche, but increasing downforce over the front axle has. Attempts were made with things like the dive planes on the front of the 997 4.0, but they have nothing like the effect of the arch vents. The problem was getting them past stringent TÜV regulations. If you look directly from above one of the vents then you cannot see the wheel and there is a fine mesh (which you could remove...) below the black gills. Nonetheless, such was the difficulty of getting them approved that Andreas Preuninger (head of GT cars at Porsche) thinks that this may be the only road car we ever see them on.

So why go to all the trouble? Well, they allow an increase in downforce on the front axle of 30 per cent, which in turn means the adjustable rear wing can be raised twice the height into the breeze. The overall figure is 345kg of downforce (with a coefficient of drag of 0.34) split in the ideal proportions of 1:2 front to rear. That means the new RS has 80 per cent of the downforce of a GT3 Cup race car. Admittedly you really need a racetrack with a corner like 130R at Suzuka to truly appreciate it, but it should have some effect from 100mph onwards, increasing lateral grip where the GT3







Left: carbon-ceramic front brake discs are 410mm in diameter – larger than a LaFerrari's. Below left: Turbo body makes the RS a very wide car on the road. Bottom left: louvres in the front wings were reportedly a nightmare get Porsche to gain TÜV approval for

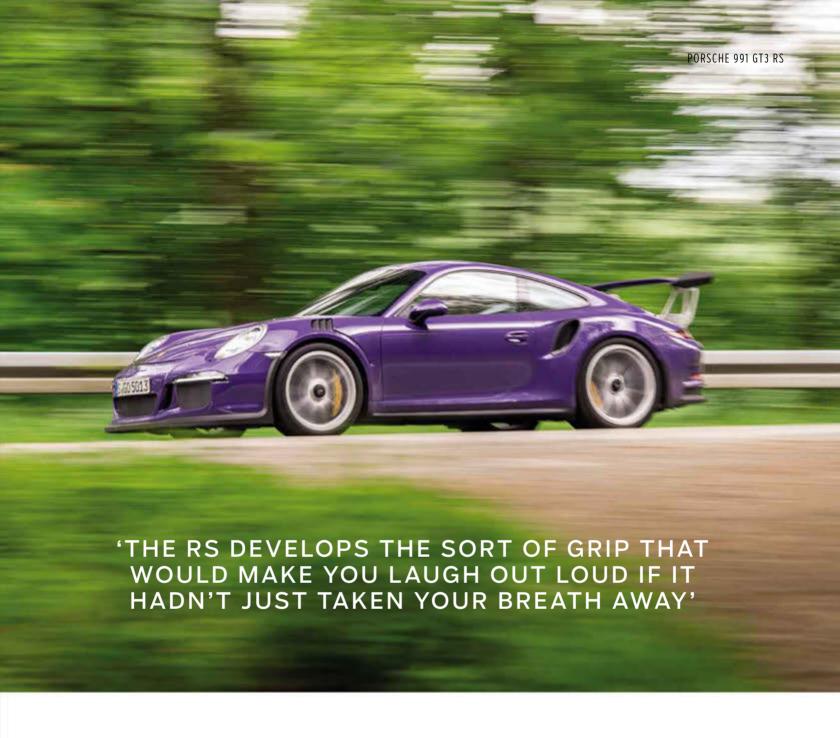
would start to lose it. Preuninger also recounts his journey on the Autobahn up to the launch, eulogising in his typically enthusiastic and honest way about the RS's stability through a set of 170mph sweepers.

Unsurprisingly, photographer Dean Smith and I are up early the following morning. The RS's engine takes a moment longer to catch than a regular GT3's, but then settles to a familiar lumpy idle, a touch more noise filtering into the cabin than before. Pull the lever back to select D, squeeze the throttle, the electronic handbrake releases automatically and we're away. With cold fluids running around the car it's only right to take the first few miles gently, but although you might think it would be frustrating driving an RS slowly, the surprise – perhaps the biggest of the whole day – is how engaging and enjoyable it is.

Whilst not as raw as previous RSs, there are plenty of noises and sensations to enjoy. The rose joints in the front suspension clank a little over bumps (it rides surprisingly well in the softer of the two PASM settings) and there is immediacy to the way the whole car reacts to cambers and imperfections so that it feels alive underneath you and in your hands. The electric power-assisted steering is undoubtedly the best I have experienced too, with less filtering of information and an uncanny weighting that (in the dry at least) feels almost hydraulically assisted. I also think the smaller wheel is a real improvement and would suit the standard GT3 too, the smaller inputs better matching the phenomenal rate of response both cars have.

The one area in which the RS could be more involving is, perhaps inevitably, the gearbox. A manual really would add to the interactivity, but somehow even the PDK could be a little more involving. The paddles, beautiful though they are, have such a short and efficient throw that it just seems a bit too clinical. Their efficacy matches the response from the 'box, but a bit more flair would be nice.

Glancing in the mirror as we trundle through a village, it occurs to me that, ironically, one performance improvement has also had a positive practical impact: with the wing hoisted higher you have a much clearer line of sight out of rear window. Our first destination for the day is Germany's Bilster Berg Drive Resort, which features a beautiful and utterly terrifying track. Walter Röhrl was rumoured to have had an input in its design but when asked about it he



apparently said, 'I wouldn't have made it that difficult.' There are bumps and blind crests and one drop so steep it makes the Corkscrew at Laguna Seca look like a child's slide.

It's not the sort of place you learn in a couple of laps, but the tortuously technical nature of the circuit throws the new RS's abilities into sharp relief. Over a handful of laps a few things are made very clear, starting with the increase in grip. The wider body not only shelters wider tracks, it houses the same size wheels and tyres as the 918. Apparently when the idea was first floated, all the numbers said that they simply wouldn't fit, but somehow Porsche has squeezed them in and the result is monstrous turn-in grip and traction.

The speed the RS is capable of takes some getting used to, but rather than being

intimidating, the huge grip seems to instil confidence through stability. There is a ban on turning the ESP off on the track, but the RS still eventually moves a certain amount even with it on, and although you are travelling very fast when you reach the limit of grip, you can lean into it rather than feeling that you're approaching a knife-edge.

As you would expect, the engine is the other stand-out feature, hauling relentlessly down the two long straights. The flat-six has the same bore as the 3.8-litre engine in the standard GT3 but now has a 4mm longer stroke, taking it out to 3996cc. The conrods are titanium and the cranks in RSs are made from the same type of remelted steel as the ones in Porsche's 919 Hybrid Le Mans cars. Perhaps most interesting of all, however, is the new intake system. Initially the

wide body was only adopted so that the tracks could be widened and the larger wheels fitted. However, when the engineers were wondering what to do with the holes in the rear arches that normally serve to cool the Turbo's engine, they decided to completely change the way air gets into the RS's unit. The main advantage of using these holes is that the air coming down the sides of the car is much less turbulent than the air that arrives at the base of the rear screen (where the intakes normally reside). The vents on the front arches help the airflow too, and at speed there is actually a ram-air effect that increases the maximum power over and above the quoted 493bhp. Incidentally, this is the engine that will now feature in all future 911 race cars, finally relieving the Mezger unit of its duties.

While at the track, we ask tall, affable

Porsche factory driver Jörg Bergmeister to do a lap for a bit of YouTube fodder. He jumps in without a helmet and hares out of the pitlane. When someone checks the timing beacon later it transpires he has set a new production car lap record for the track. The video evidence is well worth watching – visit youtube.com/evoty.

Late morning we head back out of the circuit and into the rather stunning surrounding countryside. Amongst the fields of sunny rapeseed, we find a beautiful stretch of road that bears repeating for the cameras. Each time I turn around in the confines of a lay-by I can hear the huge front tyres gently caressing the inside of the wheelarches as they struggle to cope on full lock. It's a reminder that this is a car where tolerances have been pushed to their limits. The road is quiet, but not for long

as I turn out onto the initial straight. The revs climb and the gears punch home smoothly yet insistently. There is definitely more mid-range to this engorged direct-injection engine and it feels hugely muscular above 4000rpm, then hardening again as it homes in on the red line. Much has been made of the 200rpm drop in the upper limit of the revs compared to a standard GT3, but 8800rpm still feels scintillating, and although you don't get the same rip through the final 500rpm to the red line, it's only because the engine now feels stronger earlier.

It has the most wonderful soundtrack too, one that pierces far and wide across the empty countryside. With a titanium silencer and the intakes on the hips, there is even more of a motorsport timbre to the loud, baleful yowl that fills the cabin and lingers in its wake. The first

corner is a sweeper that can be taken without lifting, the car turning in flat and filling you with confidence. Braking is needed for the next right-hander but always less than you think, and the optional carbon-ceramic setup fitted to this car gives wonderful security and feel, so you can lean on then hit the left-hand pedal late and really hard, bringing the car to the point of triggering the ABS with complete confidence.

A set of third-gear corners through the trees then requires you to balance the car, not really accelerating or braking, just modulating the throttle, applying tiny adjustments, leaning on the huge grip, being sensitive to the cambers in the road. Every input has an instant reaction, and while talk of huge grip can sometimes have negative connotations, in the RS it just translates to dazzling agility. It's the sort of grip

## **HOW LIGHT CAN YOU GO?**

GT3 RS weight savings in detail

Part	Saving
Magnesium Roof	1.1kg
Polycarbonate windows	3.5kg
Carbonfibre front wings	2.2kg
Rear skirt	1kg
Seats	14kg
Door pulls	0.4kg
Carbonfibre front bootlid	1.5kg
Titanium silencer	4.5kg
Wiring loom	1.5kg
Fewer insulating materials	3kg
Radio and AC delete (no-cost option)	20kg
Lithium-ion battery (£1538 option)	12kg
Clubsport pack delete (no-cost option)	22kg
The property of the party of th	STREET, SQUARE, SQUARE,

## PORSCHE 991 GT3 RS

**Engine** Flat-six, 3996cc Power 493bhp @ 8250rpm Torque 339lb ft @ 6250rpm Transmission Seven-speed dual-clutch. rear-wheel drive, LSD, PTV Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Multi-link, coil springs, PASM dampers, anti-roll bar Brakes Carbon-ceramic discs (option), 410mm front. 390mm rear, ABS, EBD Wheels 9.5 x 20in front, 12.5 x 21in rear Tyres 265/35 ZR20 front, 325/30 ZR21 rear Weight 1420kg Power-to-weight 353bhp/ton **0-62mph** 3.3sec (claimed) Top speed 193mph (claimed) Price now £131,296

**evo** rating:

that would make you laugh out loud if it hadn't just taken your breath away.

You can sense where the mass is in the car, so it does still feel like a 911, but everything is so tightly controlled that you can use it more aggressively than ever before. Porsche 911s are famed for their traction, but the RS's ability to take full throttle early in a corner and just fire you out takes quite some adjusting to. This is not a car that you are going to power oversteer on the exit of a corner unless you have wilfully set it up on the way in.

When Dean plants himself in a field for the cornering shots I'm slightly nervous about what the RS will feel like over the limit when (if) I manage to unstick the huge rear tyres with the ESP off. After a couple of runs, I find the sweet spot. Turn in hard, lift, back on the throttle

and apply the opposite lock as the rear rubber reluctantly unhitches from the tarmac and the engine swings round behind. Like so many 911s before, the beauty of it is that the car never feels like it has relinquished its hold entirely, still communicating, still gripping as it slides.

As afternoon turns into evening and our time with the RS draws to a close I begin thinking what options I would tick if I were speccing an RS for my fantasy garage. I think I would keep the air con, ditch the radio, upgrade to carbon brakes, have Alcantara rather than leather and lose the Clubsport package (essentially the rear roll-cage and a fire extinguisher) as it adds a fair chunk of weight. I'd also like the fixed-back bucket for the driver's seat but a folding bucket for the passenger seat so I could access the huge space vacated by the roll-cage.

The biggest and most talked about choice with the new RS's spec however seems to be the colour. Paint isn't something we normally talk about at **evo**, but the debate has been vigorous in the office. White looks so fantastically motorsport, silver isn't as boring as you'd think and I'm not sure about the orange. The star of the show, however, is the purple. Its official name is Ultra Violet, although Silk Cut or Dairy Milk also seem appropriate descriptions. Call it what you like, I think it will be the colour that this car is remembered for.

Whatever the hue, underneath the paint is a car that is sensationally good to drive. Yes it kills bugs fast, as the advert used to say, but it is much more than just the weapon that I thought it might be. It is very much worthy of its RS sticker.



#### THIS IS THE GROUND FLOOR. THE FIRST

edition. The Macintosh 128k. The Boeing 747-100. This is the beginning of an icon (and I think you'll allow me to use the word). This is the very first Impreza WRX, or Impreza Turbo, as it was known in the UK. To be precise, this car is a Japanese domestic market (JDM) Subaru Impreza MY93 WRX Type RA; not only the first WRX ever produced, but at 1170kg, also the very lightest WRX ever produced.

Standing, gazing at a 'GC8' Impreza on a blustery and bright B660, the unchanged scene of so many **evo** and *Performance Car* tests over the years, it feels a little like I've stepped back in time. The Impreza was launched in November 1992 and while in rallying terms it was the replacement for the venerable Legacy, on the road it was a slightly more direct replacement for the more similarly sized Leone (there was some overlap, with the Leone continuing to be produced until 1994). The badge on the nose of this car is obviously not the Europe-familiar six-star oval, but what was at the time a new 'i' for Impreza badge.

With a shorter, more agile wheelbase than the Legacy, an Impreza WRX was a much better starting point for Prodrive to build a Group A World Rally car around, but Subaru knew that the Impreza would be doing valiant service in lower categories of rallying too, and it was for Group N homologation purposes that the Type RA was produced. Some people say that RA stands for Race Altered or Rally Applicant or Rally A (as in Group A), but in actual fact RA originally stood for Record Attempt. Subaru attempted and achieved a world speed endurance record in 1989 and the Legacy RS Type RA was the upshot.

People also tend to assume that RAs were painted, if not exclusively then predominantly, in Feather White like this car, but in reality 80 per cent of these first RAs saw daylight with Vivienne Red bodywork (none of them were blue and gold...). As on the new Porsche GT3 RS, white certainly does look the most motorsport of all colours, making bodywork appear stark, stripped back and bare – indicative of a lightweight philosophy. The weight-saving measures on this RA might not be quite as high-tech as on Porsche's latest RS, but they were very effective, shedding 30kg from the kerb weight.

This car belongs to Dan Leach, who bought it about a year ago for just £3300 (with a spare gearbox). It's only had three owners, but it has

by HENRY CATCHPOLE

PHOTOGRAPHY by ASTON PARROTT

Hot Subaru saloons seem to have lost their way in recent years, so perhaps now's the time to hunt down an early example. **evo** gets the ball rolling with the Type RA, the first – and lightest – Subaru Impreza WRX sold to the public

## STOP. REWIND



done more than 212,000 miles and is Dan's cherished but daily driver. Normally at **evo** we like to get the most original, unmolested examples of cars for these features, so initially I'm slightly worried when he begins telling me about the few changes made to his car. My heart sinks a little further with every modification mentioned, like a dingy being weighed down in the water with each additional item. But then Dan says something that buoys me.

'The trouble is that people on forums will often complain about this or that not being original, but Subaru made these cars to be modified. For example, you cannot tell me that the engineers in Japan honestly thought a two-pot sliding caliper setup for the front brakes was adequate. They merely put the most basic items on because they knew that everyone going rallying would change them.'

This hugely sensible outlook brings me up short and makes me look at the car afresh. Dan really hasn't done anything that Subaru wouldn't have expected and it is still very much a stripped-out MY93 Type RA. The lack of side skirts gives it a very clean look and Dan is hoping to find an original unadorned, undrilled boot, as even the low-level wing you can see here is a later addition. You might think that the front grille with its blanked-off fog lights is as basic as it comes, but this first RA actually rolled out of the factory with two totally impractical gaping holes where owners were expected to put their own fogs.

Pull the black door handle, marvel at the

frameless window and then settle into the driver's seat. The first UK Impreza Turbos got truly rubbish chairs with about as much support as a broken flip flop, but the JDM WRXs got buckets from the outset and they are ace. For me, the best seats cradle you gently at the bottom of the rib cage, locating rather than restricting, just like these. The dark material that covers the chairs has a curiously rough weave that looks like a modern interpretation of Harris Tweed. However, your eyes are more likely to be distracted by the gloriously naff 'red tiger' panels that are situated on the side bolsters, below the headrests and in nightclubs all over Essex.

The rest of the interior is pretty sparse, as you'd expect of an RA, although this car has got manual air conditioning, which was a dealer option. The original (optional) carpet mat set in this car is also worth a mention as it has the sort of lustrously deep pile that you could lose small Dachshunds in. Something I hadn't expected to see is a button marked 'I/C Water Spray', as I'd thought this only arrived in much later Imprezas, but there it is to the left of the steering wheel. The wheel itself is a tasteful three-spoke OMP item. Dan has the original three-spoke Nardi in his garage at home, but says it has become noticeably flexy with age. Being of a similar stature to me (i.e. lanky in the leg), he's also added a boss behind the wheel to get himself more comfortable.

Twist the small all-metal key, blip the immobiliser, turn the key to its stop and the engine gives a couple of familiar dry rasps before catching and settling. The distinctive burble of the flat-four

'SUBARU PUT
THE MOST
BASIC ITEMS ON
THE TYPE RA
BECAUSE IT
KNEW EVERYONE
WOULD CHANGE
THEM'







Clockwise from above: redundant fog light switch; VIN plate; tiger print – it's red, honestly; water spray can be used to keep intercooler temperatures down on trackdays and rally stages





at idle is a wonderfully comforting sound. Pulling hard at high revs in a forest, we know it has a guttural purpose (particularly when helped with a bit of antilag), but at idle its deep, mellow vibrato is the aural equivalent of a favourite soft woolly jumper.

The 1994cc EJ20 engine has, as you might expect, a few interesting peculiarities. The main difference compared to the UK cars is that this is a 'closed-deck' as opposed to an 'open-deck' engine. Closed-deck engines have more metal connecting the cylinder walls to the outer wall of the block, making for a stiffer block and better sealing of the head gasket. This, of course, means they are slightly more robust and therefore suitable for tuning. Also with tuning in mind, the Type RA has a slightly larger Mitsubishi TD05H turbo. Although the smaller TD04 turbo found in the UK cars spins up more sweetly, it's only good for about 270bhp, whereas the TD05H is good for around 320bhp. Perhaps the most fascinating detail is the inclusion of a non-working fifth injector on the inlet manifold, which was almost certainly included for homologation purposes.

As standard, this RA already has an impressive 237bhp and combined with the short gearing it instantly feels quicker than expected as I head off onto some of England's finest roads. Very soon, however, I discover just how short that gearing is. With a 4.111:1 final drive and fifth (top) gear being 0.972:1, we're talking Jacques Villeneuve short. The B660 is not a road that I've ever likened to a motorway, but very quickly it begins to feel too big and fast for the RA's ratios. At 60mph the engine is pulling 3600rpm in fifth gear. At 70 it is over 4000, the turbo is fully lit and your left hand is impulsively twitching to go searching for another gear.

This is a proper tarmac rally stage 'box, one that would be perfectly at home on the Col de Turini or on Irish lanes so narrow that the mirrors are brushing the banks on both sides. Instinctively I go in search of tighter tarmac, where the RA makes more sense. With the corners coming thick and fast you are constantly busy, your left hand barely back on the wheel before it's called back into action, syncing with your constantly dipping left leg. The noise of the boxer rises rapidly with each rush of acceleration before the sound of waves crashing on a shingle beach signals the release of boost as you back off the throttle and go for another gear.

A tiny gearlever sits atop the large pyramid of the rubber gaiter and the shift is satisfyingly mechanical without being outstandingly precise. On a long journey this setup would undoubtedly be wearing if you tried to settle at a half-decent cruising speed, but on small B-roads it's huge fun being so busy – and all at legal speeds. In this age of emissions and economy, the idea of a manufacturer producing something so preposterously short-geared seems crazy, but in terms of driver involvement it is just brilliant.

The handling is typical early Impreza, but compared to an RB5 (arguably the best of the UK cars) it feels even lighter on its feet and sharper than I'd expected. Clearly the lack of mass is a boon, but JDM cars also have alloy lower suspension arms where





the UK cars had steel. Turn-in is encouraging and more eager, helped by the slightly larger anti-roll bars fitted to this car. The springs and dampers are the original-spec items, however, and they give the Type RA a wonderful fluidity. Turn in hard to a medium-speed corner and the front tyres will initially grip then gradually bleed away their hold on the road as the car reaches maximum lean. As you drive through and out of the corner, the rear of the car will swing gradually through. It all happens in one continuous motion, with momentum rather than power the catalyst when you oversteer, and it's such a smooth motion that you feel like you have oodles of time to enjoy the sensation.

On really bumpy stretches it feels like the rebound damping doesn't quite keep up, but overall the sensations are an absolute joy, with really lovely textural feedback through the steering. The original wheels were tiny 15-inch items, but 16-inch rims were an option and Dan has fitted a set of very apt Speedlines. When he bought the car it was wearing rather track-biased Toyo rubber, but he wanted something with slightly less grip that was going to give the car more authentic and enjoyable grip levels on the road. The Goodyear EfficientGrips that he finally settled on seem to do a very good job of matching progression with sensible lateral limits. The brakes are good too; upgraded to four-pot items, they have plenty of

power, but the servo is lighter than on later cars so you've got a lovely firm pedal underfoot.

Combine it all and you have a car that positively encourages you to grab it by the scruff of the neck and dance it down the road, waltzing through corners with a lift here and a provocative early turn-in there. Given a closed stage you could easily imagine Scandi-flicking it on the entry to hairpins and living out every 555 fantasy you've ever had.

Of course, at the time that this first GC8 car was produced, no one knew the stardom and cultish following that the Impreza would go on to gain thanks to its exploits in the hands of Sainz, McRae, Burns and Solberg, amongst others. Some must have hoped, and I'm sure Prodrive predicted it, but plenty of cars are born with great expectations that are never fulfilled. There were numerous future Type RAs down the years and divining the correct specs of each one is tricky to say the least (although type-ra.com is a very good resource). To complicate matters, there are also various STI Type RAs as well as the WRX Type RAs, and then there are the Type Rs, the Limiteds and V-Limiteds, plus the various special editions both for the home market and abroad. It is a minefield. But the GC8A47D (G for Impreza, C for Sedan, 8 for Turbocharged, A for MY93, 4 for four doors, and 7D for Type RA) definitely remains the earliest, the lightest and one of the best I've ever driven.

## SUBARU IMPREZA WRX TYPE RA

Engine Flat-four, 1994cc, turbo Power 237bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 224lb ft @ 5000rpm 0-60mph 5.6sec (est) Top speed 130mph (est) Weight 1170kg

Power-to-weight 206bhp/ton Value today £3500-7000

eVo rating: \*\*\*





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# With its traditional screaming naturally aspirated engine consigned to history, the Honda Civic Type R now has to win our affection with a new turbocharged motor. That said, setting a new Nürburgring by DAN PRO lap record for frontwheel-drive cars is a promising start...



#### WHEN YOU QUIZ THE PROJECT LEADER

of Honda's new Civic Type R on his resolute commitment to the Nürburgring, he'll reply with a great deal of very worthy comments about surface changes, corner variety and long straights. Then, as his boyish grin finally bursts through an inexorably thinning facade of professional solemnity, he'll admit that the real reason he and his team spent so much time at the Nürburgring with their new machine was because their president announced to the world, much to their surprise, that they would smash lap records with it.

That which the president decrees must come to be. For Takanobu Ito it was a glib stringing together of subjects, verbs and objects, but for Hisayuki Yagi it meant three years of hard work and one almighty headache. On March 4 this year, though, Honda released a video of a preproduction Civic Type R hauling its way across the Nordschleife's 13 tortuous miles in 7min 50.63sec. The record was broken, Ito-san was not made to look a fool and, perhaps as a direct consequence, just about every metric we have available to us at evo says that the new Type R is this year's most eagerly anticipated real-world performance car.

The obligation to elevate its performance to a level far beyond that of its 2007 predecessor, be it the overall state of the hot hatch arms race in 2015 or the president's bold promise three years ago, has made this a very different kind of quick Civic to those that have come before. The headline technical sidestep is a switch from a naturally aspirated, high-revving engine to a turbocharged unit. This is the first factory car to carry both a red 'H' and a turbo, and that, for many of the enormous community of Type R faithful, is reason enough to get rather upset.

As Yagi-san points out, though, the only way

to achieve the required power output without any means of forced induction would be a heavy 3-litre engine. Aside from the sheer weight of such a unit, there would be little chance of meeting stringent emissions regulations and so, regrettable as it is, the atmospheric Honda performance engine has run its course.

In its place is a 2-litre, four-cylinder turbocharged unit that develops 306bhp at 6500rpm and 295lb ft of torque from 2500 to 4500rpm. What might just dry the cheeks of disappointed Type R devotees is Honda's continued use of its much-loved VTEC variable valve timing, the very system that made those earlier engines such screamers. The marketing department would have us believe that the new unit still wails like a stabbed banshee at the top end, but we will, of course, determine that for ourselves.

Ford first did the 300bhp front-wheel-drive hot hatch thing with its Mk2 Focus RS back in 2009, but that doesn't make the new Type R's performance figures any less impressive for this class - 0-62mph takes a claimed 5.7 seconds and top speed is some 167mph.

The only transmission option is a six-speed manual, which drives the front wheels via a limited-slip diff. In an effort to reduce the torque-steering effect of so much power, the engineers developed a dual-axis strut front suspension setup, which they claim has reduced torque-steer by more than half compared to a conventional strut. The rear axle uses a torsion beam rather than a more sophisticated multilink arrangement, but our current favourite hot hatch, the Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy, seems to cope just fine with a similar arrangement. Importantly, Honda's chassis engineers spent time developing the car on UK B-roads (this first drive is in Slovakia).

Brembo supplies the brakes - the discs are 350mm up front - and the standard tyre is a Continental Sport Contact 6 on a 19-inch wheel. The rubber is of the ultra high performance variety, but it isn't as uncompromising as the Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 that sticks the Mégane and SEAT Leon Cupra 280 Ultimate Sub8 so doggedly to a dry road.

The Type R may do without its rivals' trick tyres but it is unique, says Honda, for being the only car in its class to create downforce. We can expect the numbers to be fairly minimal since the engineers decline to give them away, but it is quite significant that the hot Civic doesn't create lift. The front splitter, near-flat underbody, diffuser and exaggerated rear wing all work to draw the car towards the road surface at speed, but the consequence is an overall aesthetic that many will find too boisterous to be in good taste.

The dashboard design seems to have been







'From apex to corner exit the diff does a marvellous job of hauling the car through on a tight line' achieved by standing a blindfolded samurai in front of a wall of clay, so multi-layered and swooping is the architecture. It's certainly a less dour place in which to sit than many of the German alternatives, and crucially the build and materials quality are now of a good standard. The hip point has been lowered by 20mm compared to the standard Civic, which gives the new Type R an immeasurably more satisfying driving position than the previous version. It quickly feels more supple on the road, too, less like its damper fluid has met Medusa's stare. At low speeds the ride is pliant, then at higher speeds it becomes relaxed enough that long journeys are nothing like as punishing as they were in the last Type R.

The old car's stiff ride wasn't only a burden in comfort terms; it also took so much of the natural chassis movement out of the car in cornering that the driver had little-to-no clue how much grip there was and the front axle would quite often fail to find any meaningful purchase on initial turn in. This new version, in contrast, shifts its weight forward as you trail brake then rolls just enough to let you feel the forces rise in cornering. It's an altogether more intuitive car to point towards an apex, just for its chassis being a little more forgiving.

It'll also ride bumps and potholes far more effectively than the old car, all the while remaining tautly controlled and composed both in the bends

and over an undulating surface. And while the old car's balance was biased towards understeer, this version is more neutral from turn-in to apex and also considerably more playful and responsive to a sharply lifted throttle or a keenly judged brake input, making it more engaging and enjoyable along a road. Grip levels across the car are enormous, too. In fact, in overall terms the new Type R has a chassis worthy of this incredibly competitive class.

The steering is very sharp, precise and natural in its weighting, but only when the front wheels have already let go will the rim deliver any sort of feedback. Under full load in second gear there's only a suggestion of torque-steer, and from apex to corner exit the differential does a marvellous job of transferring drive to the road and hauling the car through on a tight line.

A button within the cabin marked '+R' reduces steering assistance, relaxes the stability control, sharpens throttle response and increases the damper stiffness by 30 per cent. The mode is not configurable, so while on the smoothest of road surfaces that extra effective spring rate is as welcome as the sharper throttle or more distant stability intervention, it will very likely be too much for the UK's bumpy, rutted back roads. It also remains to be seen how effectively the car deploys its vast power reserves to a wet surface.

## What were your ambitions for the project at the start?

To put it simply, we wanted to create the most extreme Type R ever built. We've been developing Type Rs for 20 years now, so with this history in mind, we wanted to build the most powerful, most highly performing Type R ever.

#### Why did you spend so much time at the Nürburgring?

The Nürburgring is the best place to evaluate a vehicle because it's not just a very challenging circuit, it also has lots of different types of tarmac. You also have a lot of undulations, a long straight where aerodynamic performance is required, slow corners where traction is required, high-speed corners where downforce at the rear is required, uphill sections where you need engine torque. lots of combined corners where gear ratio matching is important... Every performance aspect of the vehicle can be judged.

For us, it was also because our president announced in 2012 that we would build a Type R that was the fastest [front-wheel-drive car] around the Nürburgring!

#### If performance was so important, why didn't you fit track-biased tyres and a dual-clutch transmission?

The car's attributes for daily use are just as important as it being optimised for the racetrack. In that sense it was a must for us to use street tyres. This is the reason we have worked with Continental to develop a compound and a tread pattern that is really optimised for this vehicle. We believe the Continental Sport Contact 6 is very much suitable for this car. We know the Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 is very high performing, but it is a single-minded tyre.

The reason we opted for a manual transmission was to maximise engagement and car control. That's why we have optimised the shift quality of the gearbox. If a beginner drives the car on the Nordschleife he might be quicker with a DSG, but if you have a skilled driver the time difference between DSG and a manual gearbox is marginal. If people are saying they would be faster with DSG, before complaining about the hardware please try to up your driving skill!

#### Why did you switch to turbocharging for the Type R?

There is a Honda development outlook called the 'MM principle'. It stands for 'mechanics minimum, man maximum'. We literally want to reduce the occupying space of mechanics as much as possible in order to maximise the space for man. That's a basic development principle that is applied to all our products. A 2-litre turbo was judged to be the best balance for performance and efficiency. You could go for a 3-litre naturally aspirated engine, but then you have a very front-heavy car. If you focus on the target you want to achieve – the fastest front-wheel-drive car on the Nürburgring - you will see that a 2-litre turbo is the most suitable powertrain.



#### Clockwise from above:

Porsche's GT3 RS isn't the only new performance car with wing louvres - these ones are for engine cooling, though; red cloth and an alloy gearknob are the hallmarks of Type R interiors – this one is better built than any before; rear wing 'optimises' downforce without increasing drag during highspeed cornering, says Honda; hot hatches come little more ostentatious than this...









There are two reasons why the drivetrain is no longer the centrepiece, as it has been in every previous Type R. Firstly, the chassis is a gem. Secondly, the powerplant just isn't as electrifying as VTEC engines of old. The cam switchover point can occur across a broad window, starting as early in the rev range as 1200rpm, because the turbo actually works more effectively at low engine speeds with the high-lift cam. Peak power comes in 1000rpm later here than it does in the Mégane 275, for instance, so there *is* more of a flourish towards the red line, but in truth this engine doesn't feel a world apart from any other turbocharged, four-cylinder performance unit. We've long

thought that a naturally aspirated engine would be the enduring hallmark of a Type R, but this new Civic confirms that it's actually a short, mechanical gearshift action.

Renaultsport has had things its own way in the hot hatch market for some time, but on the evidence of this first drive, the new Type R could be the French outfit's most credible challenger. Honda's hand has been forced towards turbocharging and away from the peaky, effervescent power delivery that made the red 'H' badge famous. But while some will mourn the loss of the high-revving engines, the more progressive should instead celebrate the most complete Civic Type R yet.

**Left:** new Type R is available in five different colours: Milano Red (pictured), Championship White, Crystal Black, Polished Metal (metallic grey) and Brilliant Sporty Blue (really)

#### **HONDA CIVIC TYPE R**

Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1996cc, turbo **Power** 306bhp @ 6500rpm Torque 295lb ft @ 2500-4500rpm **Transmission** Six-speed manual, frontwheel drive, limited-slip differential Front suspension Dual-axis struts, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll bar Rear suspension Torsion beam, coil springs, adaptive dampers Brakes Ventilated 350mm front discs, solid 296m rear discs, ABS, EBD Wheels 19in front and rear Tyres 235/35 R19 front and rear Weight 1378kg Power-to-weight 226bhp/ton **0-62mph** 5.7sec (claimed) Top speed 167mph (claimed)

**evo** rating: ★★★★

**Price now** £29,995

Meet the ancestors EP3 and FN2 Civic Type Rs It's hard to imagine today, but when the EP3-generation Civic Type R (the grey car here) arrived in 2001, Honda's performance brand still had a relatively low profile in the UK.

The Integra and Accord Type Rs had arrived in 1998 and each won critical acclaim, but neither was the cult icon it is today, instead, they were entertaining curios, cresting the wave of Japanese performance cars that arrived in Britain during in the 1990s.

It was the EP3 that truly popularised the Type R idea. On its debut, its headline 197bhp made it the hottest hatch available. In a time before turbocharging became the norm, the Civic's K20A2 four-cylinder engine was revelatory, delivering its frenzied output at 7400rpm and spinning on to 8600rpm.

The market was very different by the





time the FN2 Civic Type R arrived in 2007. Its Pythagorean styling was dramatically different from the 'breadvan' EP3, but its engine was only lightly revised. In a heavier chassis, its thrust no longer stunned, particularly as new turbocharged rivals took the fight well beyond 200bhp.

The VTEC 'kick' remained, however, its cam-profile change now arriving lower down the rev range. Induction noise and exhaust bark was more spine-tingling, too. Wild

exterior styling was echoed in the multi-layer dashboard, but familiar Type R cues remained, notably the Recaro seats, red trim and an alloy-topped gearlever.

Today, both cars feel brisk at best, and the FN2's fidgety chassis still grates. But each is now supremely affordable – EP3s start at £2000, FN2s from £5000 – and they're as reliable as ever. They are figureheads for the lost art of the naturally aspirated hot hatch. **Antony Ingram** 



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by RICHARD MEADEN

DHOTOGRADHY by ASTON DARROTT

With the BMW M3 nameplate at its weakest for years, it's been suggested that Mercedes-AMG has an open goal to take top honours in this highly competitive segment. So, has the new C63 S scored?





#### THE ENDURING BATTLE FOR SUPREMACY BETWEEN

Mercedes-AMG and BMW M is one of the automotive industry's great rivalries. Toe-to-toe, blow-for-blow, Stuttgart and Munich revel in the ongoing slugfest that has given us some of the most exceptional cars of recent years. Of those, perhaps none are more significant than the successive generations of C-class and 3-seriesbased cars, for it's into these family cars with genuine everyday practicality that AMG and M engineers rejoice in shoehorning extraordinary powertrains and heavyweight firepower. Compelling and corrupting in equal measure, by pretty much any measure they are all the car you could reasonably want or need.

The battle may be timeworn, but the rules of engagement have changed for 2015, with the latest-generation C63 and M3 featuring downsized turbocharged engines in place of the scintillating, highrevving, larger capacity naturally aspirated motors that previously defined the breed. Fear not, though, for while we mourn the passing of those 8000rpm monsters, there's plenty to celebrate in this new era, not least increased power, torque and outright pace. This is an arms race apparently without end.

With the arrival of AMG's new C63 to UK shores, the temptation to set up a head-to-head contest on some of our favourite roads (and Bedford Autodrome's West Circuit for some all-out lap times) is too great to resist. So we head for North Yorkshire, loping up the A1(M) before spearing off towards Malton, Pickering and Whitby, traversing the network of wide-open roads that drape themselves across this massive moorland landscape. It's an epic place and one that's perfect for testing big-hitting hardware like this.

Inevitably a large part of these cars' appeal over the years has

been the way they look. Seeing them together for the first time reveals a surprisingly stark contrast in design. The M3 is sharp and aggressive in styling and stance, all pinched details and chiselled features, with those huge starfish alloys barely contained within the artfully swollen arches. It's an unmistakable car - even if my poor old brain does still expect an M3 to be a two-door - but if you're in any doubt as to what's sitting before you, the quartet of stubby tailpipes jutting from the rear valance are an explicit M-car identifier. It means business, this M3.

The C63 - in 'S' spec here - looks less convincing in the role of supersaloon. The shape is a rather unhappy one, strange proportions and a rather amorphous tail lending the car a bit of a dumpy appearance. This despite the best efforts of the squat ride

Above: North Yorkshire is a favoured battleground for evo road tests, with enough space to give this kind of car its head. Right: C63's bling detailing is a contrast to the M3's more austere styling, and can make the BMW appear the more serious performance car on first acquaintance



'The battle may be timeworn, but the rules of engagement have changed for 2015'







height, optional multi-spoke 19-inch alloys, a suite of up-spec AMG body addenda and a bonnet complete with twin 'powerdomes'. It's not an ugly car, but it lacks the toned physique to go with the promised performance.

Inside, both cars work very hard to seduce you. Heavily sculpted seats show they mean business, the AMG going the extra mile with plenty of satin-finish metal vents and detailing to go with the £2595 Premium Package, which features dashboard leather, a Burmester hi-fi and a panoramic sunroof. The BMW is more subdued and less has pursued a more chintzy look with its new-generation cars. It creates an expensive ambience, but I'm not sure it's in line with the

Thankfully what's under the bonnet more than compensates. As we're fast coming to realise, AMG's new 'hot-V' twin-turbo 4-litre V8 is a spectacular engine. Any fears it might somehow deliver a softer, less immediate, less emotional style of performance are dispelled as soon as you fire the thing up. Of course an AMG sports exhaust helps, but the sound this C63 S makes at idle, and with every subsequent stab of the throttle, is truly magnificent.

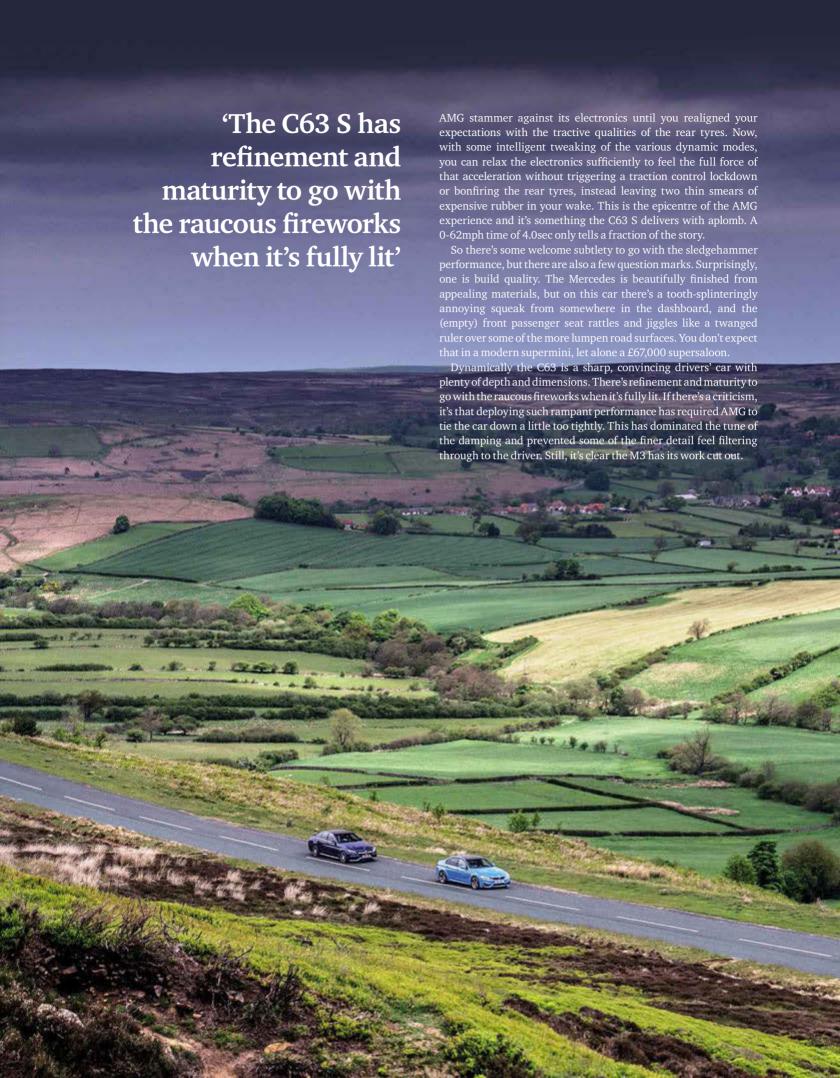
Look at the C63 S's outputs (boosted by 34bhp and 37lb ft over the regular C63) and it has the M3 licked, with 503bhp between 5500 and 6250rpm and 516lb ft from just 1750rpm all the way to 4500rpm. Indeed, you have to pinch yourself that this is a 3-series rival, such is its on-paper advantage. You'd have to give an M3 an M5 engine transplant to trump the Mercedes, which is quite a thought. Along with the increasingly excellent seven-speed MCT Speedshift transmission (complete with an all-important electronically controlled limited-slip differential), sitting on threestage electronically controlled dampers and running 390mm front and 360mm rear brake discs, with amazing 14-piston calipers up front, this car is what happens when AMG goes all-out for glory.

First impressions are very favourable. Everything feels tight and together, with a control and precision that's new to the C63 as a breed. The steering is quick, but not excessively so, which makes accurate, confident placement a wholly intuitive process. The car feels firmly suspended, even when you wind it back to its Comfort setting, but there's enough pliancy to let it work on these extremely challenging roads. The brakes are perhaps a little too keen to respond to your first input, but it's something you can adapt to rather than constantly curse.

Cussing of a different kind takes place when you explore the

C63 S's performance, for the way its 1655kg is picked up and thrown at the horizon is borderline bonkers. The engine is a truly mighty thing. Aurally exuberant and explosively potent, it makes the car heart-poundingly rapid when you pull the pin and merely imperious when you simply wish to make progress.

There was a time a greedy footful of throttle would see an





### On track

Venue Bedford Autodrome, Bedfordshire, UK **GPS** 52.235435, -0.473227 Conditions Dry, 15C **Layout** West Circuit Length 1.8 miles **Direction** Anti-clockwise



HEFTY REAR-WHEEL-DRIVE SALOONS PERHAPS AREN'T A natural choice for fast laps, but they're always a lot of fun and this pair is certainly no exception. This is the first time we've driven Bedford Autodrome's recently revised West Circuit, so the times aren't comparable with any we've recorded here previously. We'll be building a new West Circuit league table over the coming months, but for now we'll just have to enjoy the simple pleasure of slugging it out in these thuggish four-doors.

First up is the M3. Bedford's track surface is smooth, so we ramp-up the damping, throttle and steering to their maximum Sport Plus settings, crank the gearbox to its quickest shift speed and, because we want to see through the haze of electronic driver aids, disable the stability control system, too.

The BMW feels grippy, agile and aggressively energetic, light on its feet but packing a heavyweight punch. The engine is strong, with a fat reserve of low and mid-range torque and a top end that's worth exploring, if rather lacking in fizz and aural fireworks. The front end is absolutely nailed to the tarmac, so you can really attack the initial low-speed hairpin, braking late and deep and carrying useful speed to the apex. Our test car is running the optional carbon-ceramic brakes, which have longer pedal travel than is ideal but consistent stopping power throughout our five-lap run.

It quickly becomes clear the trick for getting the best from the M3 is managing a clean exit without provoking too much oversteer. The limited-slip diff is responsive but it can be too aggressive, kicking the tail wide and forcing you to reduce the slip angle with corrective lock before you can start to chase the throttle with any conviction. However, if you find the sweet spot and get the M3 to slide progressively, you can play with

the balance and wheelspin to a point where it requires minimal correction and generates maximum forward drive, the rear tyres just over-rotating but not squandering time. This is particularly effective through the sweeping left-right early on in the lap and out onto the fast straight to the new complex, and then again through the fast left- and right-hand corners that complete the lap. A best of 1min 23.3sec feels like a good effort and a tough benchmark for the C63 S to beat.

Traditionally AMG saloons have struggled to deploy their performance on track, but this new C63 S feels far more together on the out lap, especially when you select Race mode and switch off the stability control. There's grip and sharp turn-in response that's a match for the M3, a firmer brake pedal for added confidence and – initially at least – enough traction to successfully transfer all that power and torque into the track surface.

You can sense the extra 135kg of mass through the direction changes, though, and the rear tyres soon wilt under the onslaught of 516lb ft once you really ask everything of them. You don't need to be quite so mindful of managing the transition from grip to slip, but nor can you meter out the performance so precisely with the Merc's limited-slip diff, so you ultimately have to live with a greater degree of wheelspin, which costs precious tenths of a second

The cast iron brakes are impressively resilient, delivering strong stopping power even as the pedal softens beneath your foot. Ultimately the AMG's weight and traction disadvantages mean its best is seven-tenths shy of the M3's time, but that shouldn't detract from an impressive – and very entertaining – performance from the C63 S.

BMW M3 1:23.3 Mercedes-AMG C63 S 1:24.0





It's fair to say we've had a rather turbulent relationship with the M3 (and M4). The recipe is an enticing one, but a less than sparkling engine and a chassis that can be decidedly spiky in damp or wet conditions have left us conflicted about a machine we should admire unconditionally. It would be easy to arrive at this test with a preconceived notion of how the BMW will perform, but it's best to leave the baggage behind and get reacquainted afresh.

On jumping out of the C63 and into the M3, the lack of bling means the interior is less immediately impressive, but there's a purity and honesty that's reassuring and somehow more appropriate in what is an overtly sporting saloon. It might not be showy, but the M3's cockpit is a driver's delight. Starting the engine up, though, it's hard to hide your disappointment. The straight-six sounds purposeful, but in an industrial way. It certainly doesn't make you smile in the way the Mercedes' ballsy V8 does, but the first few miles still feel promising. With 425bhp and 406lb ft it's a league below the C63 S, but those numbers are far from shabby, especially in a 1560kg car, and though the reserves of torque aren't as plentiful, there's more than enough shove from low revs.

Making adjustments to the damping, steering, transmission and power delivery becomes a regular part of driving these cars. The M3's interface is handier and more intuitive to use, though like in the AMG you need to pick and choose which settings alterations yield the most worthwhile changes. I prefer the less aggressive steering modes because they're more delicate, but I like the sharper throttle response of Sport and Sport Plus. The damping has greater

suppleness than in the AMG, so rather than leaving it in Comfort it's worth trying Sport for the added body control it brings.

Ah yes, the chassis. We've been critical of the M4's tendency to pogo itself into an unruly knot, for the chassis makes the car pretty darned scary in the wet, but to mine and road test editor Dan Prosser's mild consternation, this M3 feels more composed than we're expecting. Okay, so the roads are dry, but it definitely feels more controlled in vertical movement and more in sync with the road. You can still feel the occasional twitch and shimmy, but rather than develop into something more serious, the M3 catches itself and settles. Combined with steering that has a sweeter rate of response and greater clarity of feel than the C63's, this gives you more confidence, which in turn allows you to enjoy the tremendous front-end bite and strong traction. This is a car that really encourages you to push through the corners. You feel more intimately connected to the action.

**Below:** while the Mercedes comfortably outguns the BMW in terms of power and torque, the cars' respective weights make for more closely matched power-to-weight ratios



Consequently, when you really attack, the M3's teeth feel that bit sharper. Both ends of the car bite into the tarmac with more conviction and you can use more of the performance more of the time. Of course, there's less engine performance to manage, but the M3 plays to those who like to use everything they have. The Active M Differential feels more aggressive when it wakes up, so you need quicker wits and greater sensitivity to get the best from it, but if you make the effort it finds cleaner, more effective drive out of the corners. The M3's brakes – optional carbon-ceramics on this car – are easier to modulate, too, but have a slightly softer pedal. In terms of stamina and stopping power, both the M3 and C63 S are well within themselves on the road.

You could live with either of these cars and be one of planet's more smug individuals. With ample power, abundant poise, plenty of presence and a satisfyingly premium feel, they elevate the everyday car to dizzying heights. However, if we're being critical – and we are – neither car is perfect. The AMG's motor knocks the M3's into the middle of next week for output, excitement and

seal it victory by the narrowest of margins.

#### BMW<sub>M3</sub>

Engine In-line 6-cyl, 2797cc, twin-turbo

**Power** 425bhp @ 5500-7300rpm **Torque** 406lb ft @ 1850-5500rpm Transmission Seven-speed dualclutch (option), rear-wheel drive, LSD Front suspension MacPherson struts, coil springs, adaptive dampers,

**Rear suspension** Double wishbones, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-

**Brakes** Carbon-ceramic discs (option), 400mm front, 380mm rear,

Wheels 9 x 19in front, 10 x 19in rear

**Tyres** 255/35 ZR19 front, 275/35 ZR19 rear. Michelin Super Sport Weight 1560kg

Power-to-weight 277bhp/ton **0-62mph** 4.1sec (claimed) **Top speed** 155mph (limited) **Basic price** £56,595

**evo** rating: \*\*\*

#### **MERCEDES-AMG** C63 S

**Engine** V8, 3982cc, twin-turbo

**Power** 503bhp @ 5500-6250rpm **Torque** 516lb ft @ 1750-4500rpm **Transmission** Seven-speed MCT. rear-wheel drive. LSD

**Front suspension** Four-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll

**Rear suspension** Multi-link, coil springs, adaptive dampers, anti-roll

Brakes Ventilated cast-iron discs. 390mm front, 360mm rear, ABS, EBD

**Wheels** 8.5 x 19in front. 9.5 x 19in rear

**Tyres** 245/35 ZR19 front, 265/35 ZR19 rear, Michelin Super Sport

Weight 1655kg

Power-to-weight 309bhp/ton **0-62mph** 4.0sec (claimed) **Top speed** 155mph (limited) **Basic price** £66,810

**evo** rating: \*\*\*





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Web editor

One day soon, a collection of nondescript hoxes will become perhaps the most exciting car in the evo car park. We hope...



#### RENAULT MÉGANE by Richard Meaden

Contributing editor

A trip to the Spa Classic race dispatched with ease, shows how the 275 Trophy allows you to have your cake and eat it



#### FORD FIESTA ST by Henry Catchpole

Features editor

It's a big month for our Mountuned Fiesta, as it goes up against all its main rivals – turn to p78 to see how it fares



#### FERRARI 16M by SSO

Contributor

Its delicious balance and handling shackled by boring roads, it might be time for the



#### SEAT LEON CUPRA by Ian Eveleigh

Production editor

Eveleigh reflects on his time with a SEAT capable of stealing sales from both Audi and VW. Our Cupra 280 will be missed



by Dean Smith

SKODA OCTAVIA vRS

Contributing photographer

RANGE ROVER SPORT

Changing perceptions is hard work, but there's no reason

why this generation of Range Rover shouldn't do just that

by Nick Trott

Editor

Squeaking sunroof finally

enormous 19in wheels...

#### MAZDA MX-5 by Antony Ingram

Staff writer

Ingram begins to turn his Mk1 MX-5 into one of the finest examples on the road. But first, some new tyres



#### SUBARU WRX STI by Stuart Gallagher

fixed, Smith gets his vRS back. Also making a return are its



AUDI S1

by Ian Eveleigh

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Eveleigh borrows our baby super-hatch and discovers

much to like about the driving

Managing editor

An impromptutwin-test sees our Scooby go up against the Audi S3 saloon. The verdict? Closer than you might think



#### VW GOLF GTI by Aston Parrott

Staff photographer

VW AMAROK

No, he isn't compensating

arsenal of filming gear

for something. Riley actually needs a truck to lug around his

FORD ESCORT RS2000 by Henry Catchpole

Catchnole's Escort rally car

won't look like this for long. He's been busy sourcing new

livery ideas from evo readers

Features editor

by Sam Riley

Film-maker

Light recommissioning prepares Parrott's Mk2 GTI for summer, but how much did it all cost?



## FORD FOCUS RS

Subeditor

by Richard Lane

Lane's Focus RS checks in at Ford's Heritage Collection in Dagenham for a shakedown



#### FERRARI 458 ITALIA by Simon George

Contributor

Ferrari build quality? Poor? Rubbish, says George, as his 458 continues to look the part



#### Also on the evo fleet: BMW 2002, BMW M4,

Lancia Delta Integrale, Lamborghini Murciélago, Nissan GT-R, Maserati GranCabrio Sport, Ferrari F40, Porsche 996 Carrera, Kia Proceed GT, Peugeot 106 Rallye, Porsche 911 SC, Toyota Celica GT-Four WRC



## Seven 420R

Caterham

NEW ARRIVAL

evo is building its own hardcore sports car. This is how we plan on doing it



Right: evo's

best (and worst)

mechanical minds

converting numerous boxes of bits into a car - find out how

the build progresses next month

begin the task of





🁩 fastfleet@evo.co.uk 🕒 @evomagazine 🕜 www.facebook.com/evomagazine

CAN ANYONE BUILD A Caterham Seven? That's exactly what we took our first steps towards discovering when we made the decision to have our new 420R long-termer delivered in boxes.

What we didn't quite anticipate was just how many boxes it would come in. Surely the engine just needs a few 'bits' attaching to it and you're away? Unfortunately not. A Seven requires the sort of removal van you'd use to move the average family from house to house.

As such, we needed a fully stocked workshop in which to get the build done. Mission Motorsport kindly answered that call, offering us a full week at its HQ near Oxford to put the 420R together.

It's now left to evo to formulate

some sort of plan to get our Seven built in the short timeframe we have. The answer, we believe, is to share the various elements of the build between every member of staff – some of whom, admittedly, have more mechanical experience than others – with the week culminating in a fully built car.

The first day will see myself and road test editor Dan Prosser tackle the front end of the car. Dan will then leave to go and show off in cars somewhere, with subeditor Richard Lane stepping in the next day to work on the suspension. The rest of the build will be a bit more freeform, with the aim of having the engine and gearbox fully fitted by Thursday.

It's going to be quite a challenge, but if a week's work can save you the £3000 Caterham asks to build the car for you, surely it's worth it?

The main concern is for the road test team, who will have to place their trust in, say, the skills of a web editor (that's me) at fitting brakes before taking the car out on track. As I've reassured them, though, the brakes won't be the issue – it'll be the wheels falling off mid-corner at Anglesey Circuit that'll get you.

In all seriousness, every single member of the **evo** team is hugely excited about getting behind the wheel of our 420R. Jethro Bovingdon was hugely impressed by the model when he first drove one (in **evo** 209), but the spec we've chosen promises to make our machine even better.

A basic 420 is £26,995 as a kit, but we've managed to add £6400 of options to this. There's the 'R pack', of course, which for £3995 adds a limited-slip diff, lightweight flywheel, sports suspension, shift lights and an uprated brake master cylinder, as well as plentiful interior carbonfibre. We've also chosen a six-speed gearbox, 13-inch black Apollo alloys, ventilated front brake discs with four-piston calipers, full weather equipment and, last but by no means least, a trackday roll-bar.

Our 420R is going to be quite a thing – provided it doesn't fall apart as a result of our building skills. Now, let's find the instructions. 

✓

**Hunter Skipworth** (@HunterSkipworth)

Date acquired June 2015 (we hope)
Total mileage
Mileage this month 1/a
Costs this month 1/a
mpg this month 1/a





**END OF TERM** 

# **SEAT** Leon Cupra 280

Volkswagen's 'lesser' sibling has come of age, says Eveleigh, especially in the case of its hot hatches OF ALL THE LONG-termers I've run, none has exceeded my expectations like the SEAT Leon Cupra 280. It's not that I had low expectations for it, you understand, but having been the custodian of a previous-generation Leon Cupra for 11 months, and having sampled countless VW Group hot hatches over the years, I thought I knew what to expect. Namely an impressive combination of speed and composure, but perhaps a lack of that X-factor that keeps your interest piqued in the long run.

How wrong I was. After 12 months with the new Cupra, I still found myself approaching clear, well-sighted corners with a flutter of excitement inside. In fact, in my last week with KU14 WWB, I took the long way home every single evening for this very reason. Put simply, the Cupra 280 is not only the best SEAT I've ever driven, it also ranks amongst the very best VW Group hatches I've ever driven.

This might not be what you'd guess from its appearance. The current Leon looks very smart, but even in Cupra spec it remains slightly understated, especially when finished in white (as, it seems, are about 90 per cent of all new

Leons) and equipped with five doors. A DSG gearbox, leather, an upgraded hi-fi and a few other odds and ends took the price of our car up to £31,030, but basic the Cupra 280 starts at £27,210. This pitches it perfectly against any rival you care to mention, especially when you take the relative power figures into account. In fact, the 280 outguns all of its rivals bar the Astra VXR, which has an identical 276bhp, and the Golf R, which boasts an extra 21bhp but costs £3k more and falls behind in power-to-weight terms due to its four-wheel-drive system.

Despite being front-drive only, the Cupra 280 has little problem deploying its generous output. Key to this is the VAQ active locking differential (the initialism stands for Vorderachsquersperre, or 'frontaxle transverse differential lock', in case you're wondering). I may have mentioned this more than a few times, but with good reason: it never ceased to impress me. I found it meant I could always scribe a clean line round a corner under power, both front wheels pulling hard, no VXR or Ford RS-style tugging of the wheel in the direction you're turning. It just felt sophisticated, precise and incredibly effective.

For this reason, I remain bemused at how some reviews (not in **evo**) have claimed to struggle to detect this trick diff's presence. For me it's a defining characteristic of the car. Its work is clear – and addictive. It's why I took that long way home so frequently, and partly why I drove the Cupra so hard, so often. In fact, I often found myself driving at ninetenths rather than eight.

This, I suspect, is why I also found myself enjoying the DSG gearbox. Some colleagues – most notably photographers Smith and Parrott – thought it robbed the car of some involvement. However, I felt the Cupra had the pace to justify having paddles. I'm not normally a late braker or an advocate of paddleshifts on hatchbacks, but here braking hard into corners and popping in a rapid succession of downshifts just felt right.

Back off a few notches, though, and the Cupra could do day-to-day perfectly well, too. It was an effortless car to potter around in, and the interior was well appointed, with materials and styling a step up from the old Cupra's. OK, it was no S-class, but at no point was I bugged by the quality of anything in the cabin. It was a fine place to spend



'It's not only the best SEAT I've ever driven, it also ranks amongst the very best VW Group hatches I've ever driven' time – and purposefully all-black.

It also felt as-new solid when the car left us with 17,500 miles on the clock, with not a squeak, creak or rattle to be heard. The only problems were the satnav map inexplicably jumping to Wolfsburg, home of VW's HQ, on a handful of occasions, and the DAB radio refusing to work when the heated rear screen was activated. That latter problem was solved with a new rear screen, which has the aerial for the radio embedded in it.

Costs-wise, the Cupra averaged just over 30mpg – completely acceptable given the pace it so often delivered – and required a litre of oil at 14,000 miles (£17.99), a service at 15,400 miles (£149), and four new tyres about halfway between those (£615.96), a tactical front-to-rear swap of the original 235/35 R19 Bridgestone Potenzas RE050As at 6000 miles getting the very most out of the tread of all four.

So, the Cupra 280 has that X-factor, being fast and fun, and remaining entertaining in the long-term. It's also practical, effortlessly useable, keenly priced and doesn't cost the earth to run. Would I recommend it? Without hesitation.

Ian Eveleigh 🛭



Date acquired March 2014

Costs £782.95 (see text)

**Duration of test** 12 months

Overall mpg 30.3

Purchase price £31.030

Trade-in value £21,995

Depreciation £9035

Total test mileage 17,150





Above: paddles weren't universally popular with the evo team, but Eveleigh felt they were justified. Above left: 'Drive Profile' system allowed fine-tuning of the engine map, gearshifts, suspension and steering

#### Mazda MX-5 Mk1

With the honeymoon period over, it's time for work on Ingram's imported MX-5 to begin

POPULAR OPINION suggests the Mazda MX-5 is one of the most reliable cars on the road. I wouldn't challenge that, but no car is safe from the ravages of time and my own Eunos is fast approaching its quarter-century birthday. That's a gentle way of saying there are aspects that now need my attention.

First up are the tyres. Those aren't a quarter-century old, but the canyons and valleys in the sidewall of the offside rear and the frequency with which it needs topping up with air suggest even a shorter passage of time has not been kind to the rubber.

Unfortunately, the car's age is also apparent in its puny 14-inch wheels and resulting 185-section requirements. The only cars using tyres of this size today are 1-litre city cars, and they run rock-hard eco-biased compounds that aren't exactly what most people would want on their Eunos. Finding suitable rubber is therefore a nightmare.

Thankfully, Dunlop offers its Sport BluResponse in 185/60 R14. The image that 'BluResponse' conjures isn't promising, admittedly, but Dunlop assures me that motorsport-derived compounds make it suitable for faster driving, in addition to the promised fuel savings and improved wet-weather grip. I'll have a set fitted by the time you read this, so I shall report back.

Other things also need investigation. Each day when I back the car out of my garage, the patch of oil on the floor has grown a little larger. The clutch is slipping, the idle is a little unpredictable after hot restarts and the brakes are squeaking in a 'replacement needed' way rather than the more desirable 'race car entering the pits' way.

I also intend to get the Eunos serviced. The next month or so will be expensive, but at the end of it, K137 EJB should be as fresh as the day it left Hiroshima.

#### Antony Ingram (@evoAntony)

Date acquired	February 2015
Total mileage	90,752
Mileage this month	384
Costs this month	£141 (four tyres)
mpg this month	32.0







**NEW ARRIVAL** 

# **VW** Amarok

Think getting a week's worth of film-making equipment into a hot hatch is easy? It isn't. That's why Riley is now driving this

BACK IN 2012, I RAN A Nissan Navara pickup. And despite its general lack of evoness, as a film-maker's work vehicle it was almost perfect.

Having since run smaller cars. including most recently a Mk7 Golf GTI for a year, I was quite looking forward to getting behind the wheel of something much more dominant on the road again. And let's not beat around the bush, the Volkswagen Amarok is *massive*. It's one of the biggest double-cab pickups we can buy here in the UK, with five spacious seats, a huge load bed and a high seating position that makes you feel like the king of the road.

The Amarok is in essence a commercial vehicle, then - a workhorse. I was, however, hoping to get my hands on a limited-edition 'Canyon' version, with its luxuries such as 19-inch alloys, privacy glass and a leather interior. Unfortunately I was a little too late and all 350 units had been sold, but as an alternative, VW suggested the also-limited-run 'Ultimate' edition..

Priced at £36,488, it gets everything Volkswagen can throw at it. On the outside there are bi-xenon

headlights (for the first time on a VW commercial vehicle) and LED daytime running lights, plus double chrome strips on the radiator grille and 19-inch alloy wheels. (I wanted black allovs but they aren't available yet - I'll see if I can switch in a few months' time.)

Running along the doors are questionable 'Ultimate' decals, which I could quite happily do without. However, the silver doormirror caps and chrome step bars both add to the aesthetic appeal. Thankfully this Amarok also comes with front and rear parking sensors and a reversing camera; these will come in handy considering that it struggles to fit within a typical UK parking bay...

The interior styling also gets

'It feels like you're in a Golf or Passat, which is where VW edges ahead of its competitors'

an upgrade in Ultimate form, with Alcantara-trimmed heated seats, a multifunction leather steering wheel, satnav and alloy pedals. It feels like you're in a Golf or Passat, which is where VW edges ahead of its competitors.

Mechanically, the Ultimate is identical to the standard Amarok. with a 2-litre twin-turbo diesel engine developing 178bhp and 295lb ft of torque and driving all four wheels; 0-62mph takes 11.3sec, but then this big pickup tips the scales at 2099kg. I'm a little disappointed VW didn't stick the 3-litre V6 TDI from the Touareg into the Ultimate. but maybe this is a direction it will take in the future. I had the choice of a six-speed manual or eight-speed automatic transmission. Although unconventional for evo, I opted for the more relaxing auto. It helps the Amarok manage a claimed 35.5mpg, which must put it among the most economical long-termers we've had in recent times.

Lugging tons of camera equipment around the UK and into Europe with a car is always a squeeze, but I don't have to be selective about what I take any



# **Renaultsport**Mégane 275 Trophy

A trip to Spa puts the 275's suitability for daily duties in the spotlight

FIRST THE BAD NEWS. Despite assurances in my last Fast Fleet update, I failed to make it to the first **evo** track evening of 2015. This means I still haven't had a proper play with the myriad settings on the Mégane's Öhlins dampers, which is a shame as I've been looking forward to exploring their range of performance and compliance. The good news is that the idea has grown into something bigger, which you'll be able to read about soon.

Missing the evening at Bedford Autodrome was a disappointment, but a trip to the Spa Classic historic race meeting offered ample compensation. My steeds for the weekend were a Lotus Cortina, an Elan 26R and a rather fine Rover V8, but the Mégane was my travelling companion for the familiar journey to the Ardennes.

I made the same trip in the R8 last year, and while the Renault couldn't quite match the Audi's sense of occasion, it did a pretty convincing job in the role of GT car, even though it's a hardcore hatchback that lives for scratching along B-roads. It was great to be able to dump all my kit in the boot, too, and while I cherish the Trophy like it's my own, it wasn't quite so worrying leaving it parked outside my hotel.

Averaging just over 30mpg meant I could get within spitting distance of Spa without stopping for fuel, which meant I could complete my return journey to the UK without having to stop again. Result. The satnav made some great calls to avoid the usual Belgian traffic jams, even guiding me successfully through the centre of Brussels early on a Thursday evening, which is normally the last route you'd want to take. Even the Recaro seats, more optimised for the Nürburgring than the Brussels ring road, proved extremely comfortable.

The biggest disappointment



Above: Mégane's Recaro bucket seats were surprisingly comfortable during the journey to Spa

 Date acquired
 November 2014

 Total mileage
 8072

 Mileage this month
 2235

 Costs this month
 £0

 mpg this month
 28.1

was the stereo, which gets a bit flabby and distorted at the volume it needs to play at to overcome the road noise on Belgium's lumpy and often concrete-surfaced autoroutes. That's a minor gripe, but perhaps one that illustrates why the Mégane's near-relentless focus on driving dynamics, rather than the peripheral aspects of everyday motoring, means it's not a car for everyone. Fortunately, it's proving to be the perfect car for me.

Richard Meaden
(@DickieMeaden)

**Skoda** Octavis vRS

#### **Skoda** Octavia vRS

Mystery irritation resolved, Smith's Skoda reminds him of its worst facet just before leaving the Fast Fleet

OUR PETROL OCTAVIA vRS is back, replacing the diesel Octavia vRS courtesy car that I reported on last month.

Our long-termer was away because of a squeaking noise emanating from the sunroof. The squeak only happened at low speeds and when the bodyshell twisted, for example when exiting a steep drive at an angle. The vRS had already been back to Skoda within the first few weeks of my custodianship because of the same issue. The first time around it was remedied by replacing a plastic control box that had been squashed, meaning one of the edges was rubbing. This time, though, the control box was fine.

Steve, the Skoda technician who worked on our car, found that everything was as it should be, other than the seals being a little dry. Lubing them proved to be the cure for the squeak. Why the seals were so dry Skoda can't explain; it could be something as trivial as air being forced onto them by my bike rack. Certainly no other vRS I've driven with a sunroof has squeaked.

Skoda also very kindly fitted Pirelli P Zero summer tyres while the car was with them, replacing the Goodyear UltraGrip 8 winters. These have transformed grip and traction levels tenfold but, unfortunately, the tyres came with the car's original 19-inch wheels, rather than the 18s



**Above:** those fablooking 19s are back; pity about what they do to the ride, says Smith

Date acquired September 2014
Total mileage 15,998
Mileage this month 2943
Costs this month 5555.92 (four tyres) mpg this month 37.6

it's been running of late. So whilst I do have superior traction and grip, I can barely see the road through the windscreen because my eyeballs are rattling around in their sockets.

Though the 19s completely ruin the ride, they will be staying, because the vRS is due to go back to Skoda very soon. ■

Dean Smith (@evoDeanSmith)



IT'S A SHAME AUDI AND Subaru's paths never crossed on the stages of the World Rally Championship. The image of Röhrl in a Sport Quattro S1 against McRae in an Impreza tackling the Col de Turini or Kielder Forest at night is sadly a spectacle we were denied, due in no small part to the parties involved competing in different eras.

However, in 2015 Audi and Subaru do compete in the fast road saloon car category, with their respective four-door S3 and WRX STI models.

The numbers for the two are close. The WRX is £4585 cheaper than the S3 (£28,995 plays £33,580) and has 300lb ft of torque available compared to the S3's 280lb ft (although the Audi's is delivered at a lowly 1800rpm while the WRX has to wait until 4000rpm). Peak power is an identical 296bhp, arriving at 6000rpm in the STI and 5500rpm in the S3. At 158mph and 5.2sec to 62mph, the Subaru is 3mph faster and 0.1sec quicker than its German

rival, but the latter is 104kg lighter, at 1430kg. The gap between the two is fag-paper-wide, then.

There are obvious benefits the S3 offers over the STI before you even drive it, such as an interior from the 21st century, but there's been enough written about the quality of Audi interiors. With regards to the oily bits, the S3's 2-litre turbocharged in-line four not only gives away nearly half a litre in capacity to the WRX, but also has none of the character of its flat-four rival. There's a parp from the exhaust when you lift off and it fizzes to the red line, but it lacks the Subaru's gruff tones. So all this time I've been thinking the WRX had lost the aural delight of its predecessors, when judged against today's competition it delivers a full-on mechanical overture. The WRX's other trump card is its gearshift, which makes the Audi's seem a little vague and nondescript. But after this, the German begins to up its game.

The Audi's steering is more direct,

'All this time I've been thinking the Subaru has lacked the aural delight of its predecessor...'

Date acquiredDecember 2014Total mileage12,507Mileage this month701Costs this month£0mpg this month25.6

and what feel there is is clearer and more textured. The S3's ride is also infinitely better, not only in terms of body control but the secondary ride too, an area where the WRX is a real let-down, with no suppleness to any damper phase. Here the S3 really pulls away, its more settled chassis allowing you to push harder more often. In contrast, the STI struggles to shake off its low-speed inertness, and unless you take serious liberties, you always feel as if you are working against it rather than with it. The S3, while no dynamic masterpiece, feels more together, flowing through a corner with greater precision and control, reacting as expected and working with you. On the same roads I travel every day in the WRX, the S3 feels the more involving and enjoyable package.

For daily use the S3 would get my money, but on those occasions when driving is all that matters, the WRX would be hard to ignore.

Stuart Gallagher (@stuartg917)

## Ford Escort RS2000

With motorsport sponsorship comes the need to design a livery, which is where you've been a big help to our Catchpole...

Below left: Simon Boulton's suggestion was easily one of the brightest. Below: Neil Williams' 3D renderings were particularly appealing







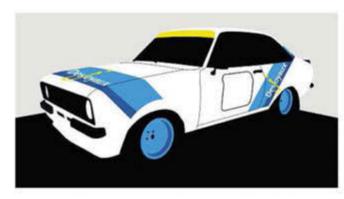
I RATHER LIKE THE CLEAN 'PET' (pre-event test) white of my RS2000, but somehow a livery is the clothing of a competition car and unadorned they can look a bit naked.

So, a while ago I began collating pictures of all the best Mk2 Escort liveries over the years and started rifling through this virtual wardrobe, trying to decide where to draw most inspiration from. Clearly I didn't want a straightforward facsimile of an iconic Rothmans, Castrol or Andrews Heat for Hire car; that first one was impossible anyway, as you're not allowed tobacco liveries unless your particular car wore the same design in period. Anyway, after a while I decided to throw the tricky task out to you lovely lot via evo.co.uk.

The stipulations were that the livery had to be based around the blues and yellow of the Desjoyaux logo (my friend Clive owns the UK branch and I rather like the irony of having a swimming pool company on the car, given that I swim slightly less

## 'Somehow livery is the clothing of a competition car. Unadorned they can look a bit naked'

Below: Michael Gooderham's entry was a contender. Right: Mark Dyment's winning design, which will form the basis of the final livery. Below right: one of the Seans at Creative FX plots how the vinyl wrap will be applied







convincingly than a bowling ball), but apart from that there weren't too many restrictions. Various designs were sent in, some of which you can see here, and in the end I fell for one of the simplest, by Mark Dyment.

After that it was down to Creative FX in Bromley (fxuk.net). They also wrapped editor Trott's Radical a few years ago, but sadly the beautiful design never saw the light of day because the car was stolen a day later. I spent a couple of hours at a computer with the ever-enthusiastic Seans (there are two of them), who whipped up a polished version of the design, adding a few neat touches along the way. All I need to do now is drag the car out of hibernation and get it down to them...

**Henry Catchpole** (@HenryCatchpole)

Date acquired	August 2011
Total mileage	n/a
Mileage this month	0
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	n/a



## Range Rover Sport SDV8

Beneath the bling is a thoroughly reliable machine. Should Trott be surprised by this? PERCEPTION IS REALITY, right? Whatever some people think, and for whatever reason, becomes a truth. Combatting skewed perceptions, then, is a battle that you'd better be prepared to fight long-term.

The Range Rover gets a fair bit of attention and comment, and that's before people have seen the Ebony/Pimento interior. The conversation generally starts with an observation about the car's size, a question about mpg, then the hot topic – reliability. Some timidly ask if I've had any problems with it; others are a little more forthright. Of the latter, most are former Range Rover drivers. Devotees, I might add, but also people who have a story (or ten) about the shonky reliability of Range Rovers they've owned.

problem in four months and 16,500 miles of hard, hard use, they are disbelieving rather than impressed. That only goes to show how tough it is to reset issues of perception.

The fact is that our Range Rover gets driven the length and breadth of Europe by evo's writers, each with a significant lead content in their right foot. We use every feature, from small electronics (heated steering wheel) to large mechanicals (ride height adjust), and we've driven it in snow, on a circuit, and on mud and sand. It goes into central London often and it's been maxed on a German Autobahn. And the net effect on the car? Well, it's getting a little more economical and that's it. I have to admit, I thought the

I have to admit, I thought the Sport would have started to flake by now, but I've had no error messages no mechanical issues and no electronic glitches. Of course, this should be expected – the warranty term is three years and perhaps the car will comically disassemble itself the moment the odometer trips over 60,000 miles. But so far there's no sign at all that this might happen.

As I write this, the car is about to come back from its first service, and all I've asked the garage to check is some premature corrosion on the tips of the tailpipes. If that's the only issue the car suffers in the 12 months I'm running it, I'll be impressed. But impressed enough to combat those perception issues? We'll see... 

Nick Trott (@evoNickTrott)

Date acquired	December 2014
Total mileage	16,545
Mileage this month	2629
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	29.8



• Audi S1

### **Audi** S1

Eveleigh explains why he's always happy to get his hands on **evo**'s \$1

IT SEEMS BARELY A WEEK goes by when Jethro doesn't pop into the office to pick up a GT3, a Speciale, a Huracán or some such for his latest review or video job. And, yes, he really does call it work. It's always good to see him, though, because it usually means I can nab the key to his S1 for a day or two.

There are so many things I find appealing about this little Audi. One of them being the fact that it's little. From the driver's seat it really does feel like that clichéd well-cut suit – noticeably narrower than, say, a Golf, but not uncomfortably cosy. With a good driving position too, you're always acutely aware of exactly where the car's extremities are, which only serves to emphasise its compact dimensions and how much extra road you've got to play with.

And play with it you will, because the S1 has a sense of fun that matches its almost toy-like exterior appearance. It still manages to feel secure and predictable (as you'd



expect from an Audi), just without being boring (the bit that fast Audis often get wrong). So you're positively encouraged to trail-brake or try that mid-corner lift, not in a desperate attempt to inject some excitement into the chassis, but simply because it's rewarding to do so.

Add to this a manual gearbox (I still can't believe it's not DSG, but I'm very glad it isn't), a stonking 273lb ft of torque (an unusually big figure for a hatch of this size), four-wheel-drive traction and the solid, upmarket feel, and you've got a cracking little package – one I'm always happy to sample again. Handy, then, that Jethro is such a hard worker when it comes to driving supercars.

Ian Eveleigh

Date acquired	December 2014
Total mileage	6543
Mileage this month	825
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	28.1



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Volkswagen Golf GTI

## Volkswagen Golf GTI

A light recommission brings Parrott's hot hatch up to the mark in time for numerous summertime miles



ONE THING I DIDN'T mention in the Golf's first report last month is that it recently spent a year sitting in a cold, dusty garage. So steps had to be

taken to get it back on the road.

My first job was to drop the car down to my local garage for its MOT. I'd anticipated the need to replace some parts - this is a 23-year-old car - but unfortunately those parts were a new fuel pressure accumulator and radiator. Not the best outcome.

I thought they might be hard to find, but luckily for me there is one company that is a saving grace for all classic Volkswagen owners: VW Heritage, in West Sussex. The company has plenty of 'new old stock' and reproduction parts available, and after five minutes browsing its website I had both items ordered, ready to be delivered the next day. Keeping a classic Golf on the road? Easy peasy.

Parts fitted and new MOT certificate presented, the Mk2 was ready for a proper drive. I lowered myself into its aftermarket Recaro bucket seat, turned the key and immediately smiled as the 16-valve engine ignited with a raspy note from the Milltek exhaust.

A drive through Hertfordshire quickly reconnected me with many

sensations I had almost forgotten about. For one, your backside feels about an inch from the ground, but there's still amazing visibility thanks to the large windscreen and narrow pillars. The steering is also crazyresponsive and you're soon taking corners and roundabouts as tight as you possibly can.

I must say, after driving so many turbocharged hot hatches recently, the Mk2's low-down grunt is a little disappointing. Once the engine whaarrpps past 5000rpm, though, and to the red line, it's addictive. I'm over the moon to have the old girl back on the road and am looking forward to racking up the miles. Aston Parrott (@AstonParrott)

Date acquired April 2012 Total mileage 175,874 Mileage this month 441 Costs this month £306 (see text) mpg this month 32.7









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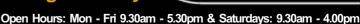


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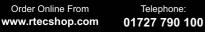


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# a Ford GT in white with blue stripes. Rubbing shoulders with the supercar is a Focus RS500, which has its fist-wide exhaust tips aimed at one of only six GT70s, the mid-engined oddity that Ford hoped might outfox Lancia's Stratos on the stages of the WRC. These cars make up but a sliver of the collection, and all around

are fast Fords: racing cars, road cars, skunkworks experiments... a Cosworth-engined Transit. Heaven.

After an hour beneath the Focus and a subsequent shakedown, it's a unanimous verdict from Ivan and Colin: this is a good 'un, and with the exception of a negligibly small oil leak that seems to have sprung from the cam sensor and, mysteriously and not entirely benignly, the absence of the catalytic converter's heat shield, it's in first-rate condition for a 12-year-old. This is quite nice to hear.

Elsewhere, Brembo's enormous 325mm front discs will soon need replacing and, that done, I can enjoy a summer exploiting the RS's talent for taking apart all but the very fastest stretches of tarmac. 

Richard Lane (@ rlane)

Date acquired	January 2015
Total mileage	67,322
Mileage this month	2101
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	27.7

# **Ford** Focus RS

The Fast Fleet's 'new' Focus gets a clean bill of health from the experts A DISMAL MASS OF RED bricks and corrugated iron, there's a warehouse that sits on the north bank of the River Thames at Dagenham, and neither the public nor employees of the company that owns it can enter without explicit permission. Today, though, is my lucky day, because I've been admitted through its timeworn doors, and while the air inside is frigid enough for me see my own breath, my curiosity is white-hot.

If you love cars, Ford's Heritage Collection is a treasure trove; if you love Fords, it's nirvana. Sitting among artefacts clad in transparent dustsheets, my Focus RS is here for a medical to be undertaken by Ford's top consultant geriatricians, Ivan Bartholomeusz and Colin Gray. The duo conserves what must be the finest fleet of classic Fords and, given that their remit includes race-prepping GT40s, this is a pretty big deal for my little Focus.

Right now, though, the RS may as well be nonexistent, because there's a dusty RS200 in the corner. It's been stripped from the midriff back – intercooler up high, in-line four nestled below and twin red springs just behind on each side. It isn't alone, either. Adjacent are two London-Mexico Escorts, behind which, sitting low and undetectable among the surrounding cars until the moment you chance upon it, is

Ferrari 458 Italia

# **Ferrari** 458 Italia

George reflects on how far Ferrari build-quality has come in recent years

l'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT supercars age a bit like our canine friends, with 12 months equalling seven supercar years. That makes my 458 35 years old and a certain orange Murciélago 73, which seems about right.

Back from its top-end engine rebuild, the Italia is in really storming form. Munching up the miles daily, that gorgeous V8 is going like a Merlin, but where Ferrari has really nailed it with the 458 is the way this supercar is screwed together. Backtrack seven years and 6th Gear Experience had five 360 Modenas. Good road cars they certainly were, but pile on the miles and the interiors would literally start coming apart. The 430 was transformed in this department and, digressing slightly, I think they're still hugely underrated.

The 458, though, hits the jackpot: five years old (or 35...) with not one broken switch or faded leather panel. Even the steering wheel is unmarked by the thousands of sweaty hands that have gripped it. WX11 still feels tight in corners, too, and there's not a rattle or squeak. In fact, given a valet, this supercar looks like a 7000-mile example, not a 70,000-mile one.

It's such a shame the trade still



insists on hammering high-mileage modern Ferraris. I suppose they'll cotton on in another 20 years...

Simon George

(@6gearexperience)

Date acquired	May 2011
Total mileage	70,067
Mileage this month	644
Costs this month	£0
mpg this month	14.0

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## **AUDI TT SPORT**

Pared-back TT has many very desirable traits – if you can get past the nameplate

TALK TOO LOUDLY ABOUT THE Mk1 Audi TT and you might hear sniggers of disapproval from nearby petrolheads. Why, you might then ask, are we featuring one as this month's Next Big Thing? Well, because if you look beyond the low-powered front-drive versions that were the big sellers, there's one particular edition that stands out from the rest – the TT Sport.

Audi already had a pretty interesting fast-TT package with the 247bhp 3.2 V6 quattro, but the Sport was based on the lighter 1.8T quattro, with power boosted from 222 to 237bhp. It was also developed by quattro GmbH – the division

responsible for the development of the RS cars.

Big changes included a more aggressive styling package borrowed from the V6, plus 18-inch multispoke alloys and a gloss-black roof. Inside, the standard front seats were replaced by a pair of fantastic Recaro buckets, while in the rear was an aluminium strut brace, bringing an increase in body stiffness. An Alcantara steering wheel completed the interior transformation.

While power was up on the normal 1.8T, weight was dropped by around 75kg (to 1390kg), resulting in a quicker 0-62mph time of 5.9sec. The chassis was substantially firmed up, too. When we first tested the Sport, in 2005 (**evo** 081), we declared

that dead steering hobbled otherwise purposeful dynamics, but we later gained a long-termer, and by the end of its time with us we were smitten with the build quality and had grown to appreciate the high level of control and surefootedness.

In total Audi sold just 800 of the 1000 Sports originally planned for the UK. Today prices start at around £5000 for a high-mileage example, while the best are still being advertised at more than £10,000. With no sign of these figures softening, the TT Sport looks like a safe – and enjoyable – place to put your money.

**Matthew Hayward** 

## In the classifieds



## 2005 TT Sport

£4695 centralmotorco.co.uk

158,000 miles, Phantom Black, full service history, looks and drives like it's done half its mileage



## 2005 TT Sport

 $\pmb{\pounds 10,950} \text{ hollybrooksportscars.com}$ 

55,000 miles, Misano Red with Phantom Black roof, outstanding condition



## 2005 TT Sport

£10,990 hillsoflymington.co.uk

52,000 miles, Avus Silver with Phantom Black roof, full service history, superb example

## Or consider...

## Audi TT 3.2 V6 quattro

Looks almost as special and its 3.2-litre V6 engine (shared with the Golf R32) offers a much more pleasant soundtrack. It's slower to 62mph, though.

## Porsche Boxster (987)

Porsche's second-generation Boxster might lack the flamboyance of the TT Sport, but it counters with a sublime driving experience that the Audi can't hope to match. 'S' models also pack considerably more punch.

## Nissan 350Z

A rival to the TT, but with a big V6 engine and a playful rear-wheel-drive chassis, the Nissan couldn't be more different. It's a bit of a junior muscle car in comparison.

## Market Watch

Knowledge

Insights into the used car market

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## Ask the expert

Your buying questions answered



I've just moved house, swapping a boring motorway commute for a country-road adventure in car control. My BMW 116d is boring, gutless and terrible in slippery conditions. Do I replace it with a Honda FD2 Civic Type R saloon, a Mk5/6 Golf GTI, or get a four-wheel-drive Audi S3 or Golf R32? Whatever I choose needs to be family-friendly and cost under £15,000.

Michael Motteram, Essex



As the FD2 Civic (pictured) was never officially imported to the UK, it truly is a connoisseur's choice, coming with chassis

strengthening and a limited-slip diff missing from the equivalent Euro models. Although it will cost you more to buy and run than a Golf GTI, it shouldn't require too much specialist attention – and being a particularly special Type R, it will likely hold on to its value pretty well too.

While the S3 and R32 have their charms, neither will truly entertain once you have tasted a more rear-biased four-wheel-drive car. Both do, however, offer more habitable interiors and will shine in wet conditions, with real cross-country speed. But as you're not scared of Japanese performance cars, another consideration should be the Mitsubishi Evo VIII or IX. As four-wheel-drive cars go they're among the most exciting, and with four doors and a reasonable sized boot they're actually fairly family friendly.

The Mk5 Golf GTI is the sensible choice, though. It always had the better of its rivals, and the Mk6 never thrilled us in quite the same way. The Mk5 will do motorway duties just as well as your BMW, but will then come alive on an interesting B-road. And if you get bored, you can always trade up to an FD2 or Evo after a year or so. **MH** 

 $Email your \ question \ to \ experts@evo.co.uk$ 

## Just looking

The pick of the classifieds this month



Ford Shelby GT500 £39,995 David Boatwright Partnership, Essex boatwright.co.uk

01376 552399

The arrival of the 2015 Ford Mustang has seen a resurgence in the popularity of American muscle, and steroidal versions of the new Mustang's predecessor, such as this 6500-mile-old Shelby GT500, are now in considerable demand.

Dating from 2012, this GT500 doesn't have the later version's 662bhp, 5.8-litre engine, but the 550bhp produced by its supercharged 5.4-litre V8 ought to be plenty – especially for under £40k. The 0-60mph sprint takes around 4.5 seconds, assuming you can successfully transfer all 510lb ft of torque to the tarmac.

The GT500 also possesses something few of today's fast coupes do: proper character. Some say the interior quality is shoddy and the engine is too thirsty, others simply drool over its retro looks and V8. **Sam Sheehan** (@evoSamSheehan)



Chevrolet Corvette C5 £14,995 IBE Cars, West Yorkshire ib-e.co.uk 01484 296786 In Europe, our strongest memories of the Corvette C5 are often attributed to the C5-R Le Mans racer. Recollections of its battles against Porsche's 911 GT3 RS and Chrysler's Viper GTS-R portray a scene of its thunderous V8 spitting flames at night.

Incredibly, this 30,800-mile example of the road-going version of that iconic American racer can be had for less than £15,000. Though its 5.7-litre V8 is substantially less powerful than the race car's, it still has a healthy 345bhp, enabling the C5 to bellow its way to 60mph in 4.8 seconds and on to 172mph.

Despite dating from the year 2000, the equipment list includes a head-up display. This car is also a targa, so its roof panel can be removed. Like the Shelby above, build quality may not be a match for its European counterparts, but few other cars exude such presence for £2000 less than the price of a new Fiesta ST.

## Trader chat

## Guy Lees-Milne Classic Car Auctions

The team behind Silverstone Auctions recently launched a new auction house, Classic Car Auctions, which specialises in more modern, affordable and up-and-coming classics. We spoke with Guy Lees-Milne, general manager of CCA, to understand the move.

'With the classic car market continuing to grow, we saw a gap for an auction house truly specialising in mid-market "everyman" classics,' said Lees-Milne. 'Our aim is to make buying and selling a classic car as easy and transparent a process as possible, as well as to inject some energy into this sector.

'Certain modern classics have moved significantly in the last year, and we've seen that as long as production numbers were small and premium brands continue to attract loving fans around the world, these cars will continue to rise in value. The rise of technologically advanced sports

cars with more weight will only serve to drive enthusiasts and collectors back to older models that retain a purer driving experience

'Classic car auctions have definitely become more mainstream. This is reflected by the amount of media coverage they now receive and the significant numbers of new buyers at our sales. With more private buyers now attending, CCA sales will be held on Saturdays.'





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## **Buying Guide**

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## **Jaguar** XKR & XKR-S 2006-2014



## **Overview**

Recently consigned to history, the second-gen Jaguar XKR/XKR-S is fast, effortlessly elegant and temptingly good value Words: Brett Fraser

SUPERCHARGED 4.2-LITRE V8 BANGING OUT 420BHP – Jaguar ushered in its new XK range in style, putting the XKR into the mix from the start of sales in 2006, rather than waiting a couple of years before introducing the hot one.

While the new, lan Callum-designed XKR ran with much the same engine as its predecessor – a few extra horsepower liberated through changes to the engine management, amongst other tweaks – it boasted a significant advance over its XK8-based forebear in the form of the XK's all-aluminium bodyshell, which was light, strong and exceptionally well made. The XKR was also treated to a smooth-shifting ZF six-speed automatic transmission, complete with a paddleshift operation of such quality that similar systems on rival cars began to seem primitive.

A further advance for the XKR was the adoption of Jaguar's 'CATS' (Computer Active Technology Suspension) adaptive damping, which enabled the big coupe, or convertible, to glide when occasion demanded then lithely attack corners.

But the XKR wasn't the big kahuna of the line-up for long. In 2008, Jaguar's Special Vehicles team created the very limited edition – just 200 for the whole of Europe – XKR-S, with the same engine but improved aerodynamics, massive Alcon competition brakes, lowered suspension, an Active Exhaust System and its speed limiter lifted to 174mph.

Even that, though, was outgunned by a revised and facelifted XKR that arrived in 2009 with a supercharged 5-litre derivative of the V8 boasting 503bhp. In 2010 the Speed Pack (£3500) was introduced. It provided a new front splitter and rear diffuser, a bigger rear wing and more pronounced side skirts; it was frequently ordered along with the Black Pack, which included gloss black 20-inch alloys and similarly hued window surrounds. A year later, a new, bewinged XKR-S arrived, upping the ante further still with 542bhp.

But the craziest and most desirable XK was the XKR-S GT of 2013, only ten of which were allocated for the UK market. Each featured new front and rear suspension, a quicker steering rack, enormous carbon-ceramic brakes, a 40kg cut in weight and a £135,000 price tag.

## **Checkpoints**

## **Engine and transmission**

Nothing much goes wrong with these engines, confirms Kevin Vanhoeck of XK specialist designXKR. 'The 4.2-litre V8 is a development of the 4-litre unit from the XK8, which in turn was a development of the 3.2-litre from the older XJ. This is well-proven technology and over the years Jaguar learnt its lessons and corrected any problems. The 5-litre, as long as it's regularly serviced, is vice-free. A handful of early 4.2s suffered from a failure of the impeller in the water pump, but Jaguar soon rectified the design.'

The six-speed ZF gearbox is another tough, proven item and is shared with several BMWs and Audis. 'Jaguar claims it's a sealed-for-life unit,' says Vanhoeck, 'but BMW and Audi recommend 40,000-mile service intervals, and so do we. There's no drain plug on the torque convertor, so we only ever manage to remove about six of the nine litres of transmission fluid it contains. Topping it up with fresh oil dilutes the residue and gives your gearbox extra life – a replacement is £5000 and an oil change just couple of hundred quid...'

Very occasionally, the seal on the output shaft to the rear diff will fail, but this is not hard to fix

## Suspension, steering, brakes

The XKR and XKR-S are relatively heavy, very fast automatic cars, so front discs can suffer. According to Vanhoeck, some people complain about warped front discs, but that's usually the result of owners fitting cheap aftermarket replacements that can't handle the heat generated by the XKR's performance – or from bad driving.

Suspension bushes on older cars can be tired at six-figure mileages, but designXKR has, in conjunction with Powerflex, developed easily fitted replacements

## Body, interior, electrics

Many fault codes displayed on the Jag's dash are the result of a failing battery – fit a good quality replacement and you'll probably discover that most, if not all, will disappear.

The aluminium body means that rust isn't an issue, but if the zinc coating is penetrated, oxidisation can flake the paint; this should be easily remedied.

Finally, wet carpet in the passenger footwell is most likely because of a blocked drain pipe for the airconditioning condenser.





1: V8 is generally reliable. 2: 5-litre XKR-S packs 542bhp. 3: brakes can wear quickly



## What we said



## 5.0 XKR-S at eCoty 2011

'The XKR-S might be the fastest and most focused Jaguar available, but as you settle into the huge, wing-backed seat, you don't find yourself in what one might call hardcore surroundings. If anything, it feels like a much more relaxed and convivial place to whileaway a long journey than the Ferrari FF. Press the starter button, and as the gear-selector rises like a Wurlitzer from the transmission tunnel, the R-S signals its intentions by snarling surprisingly loudly into life like a lion roused too early.

'If you jump from any other car here into the Jaguar, the controls in general feel lighter and more assisted. That doesn't mean that they lack positivity or are wishy-washy in their responses, far from it, just that you feel slightly more removed from the mechanics. But if we're making the Jaguar sound horribly clinical, now is probably a good time to discuss its apparent hatred of its own rear tyres. The R-S's huge 502lb ft of supercharged torque is a match for the M5 and FF, but it's well over 100kg lighter than either, making it quite probably the lairiest car here.

'Loud both aurally and visually, the Jag is a thrillingly fast coupe.' - evo 164



Above: later, 5.0 XKR-S (pictured) may be showy, but it backs it up with performance



Above: second XKR-S was electronically limited to 186mph, up from the XKR's 155mph

## Tbought one' Marc Hanson

'I'd owned the previous-generation XKR and because of this Jaguar invited me to join several other owners at Gaydon to try the then new 5-litre V8 model in 2009. It was a big step up in terms of power and there was also an upgrade in the quality of the interior.

'My current XKR is one of the very early 2010 5-litre cars: it has always been a brilliant machine but now feels a bit old in some respects, its audio and satnav

equipment in particular letting it down. It's not a sports car, it's a powerful GT, and it's the most comfortable fast car you can imagine – far better than the BMW M6 I bought recently. I also prefer it to the F-type I tried.

'I did consider the XKR-S at one point, but while more power is good for bragging in the pub. it was never going to make the Jag a dynamic match for a 911 or Audi R8, and its bodykit looked like it

had spent too long in Halfords...

'My XKR has been really, really reliable - not one thing has ever gone wrong. I've used it for long trips down to the south of France and up to the northern parts of the UK. Getting the tyres right is important – swapping the original Dunlops for Pirellis was a good move, as was fitting Pirelli winter tyres.

'I feel the XKR is massively underrated - it is a classic of the future.

The rivals

## **Aston Martin V8 Vantage**

Uses a Jaguar-derived 4.3-litre V8 (4.7 in later cars). Stylish and quick, but starting to feel its age. Prices start at £32,000.

## Maserati GranTurismo

Chic and accomplished, the Maserati coupe isn't as fast as you'd think, but offers a lot of style from about £33,000.

## Porsche 911 Carrera (997)

## **Specification**

## **Jaguar XKR 5.0** (XKR-S in brackets)

Engine V8. 5000cc, supercharger Max power 503bhp @ 6000-6500rpm (542 @ 6500)

Max torque 461lb ft @ 2500-5500rpm (502 @ 2500-5500)

**Transmission** Six-speed automatic gearbox, rear-wheel drive

Weight 1678kg

Power-to-weight 305bhp per ton (328) **0-60mph** 4.6sec (4.2sec) (claimed) **Top speed** 155mph (186mph) (claimed) Price new £72,400 (£97,000)

## **Parts prices**

(Prices from designxkr.co.uk. Tyre prices from blackcircles.com. All prices include VAT but exclude fitting)

Tyres (each) £146.48 front, £199.48 rear (Pirelli P Zero)

Front pads (set) £90.50 Front discs (pair) £600 (Alcon) Damper (single, front) £345 Suspension bushes (set) £611.40 (Powerflex)

Exhaust system £1896 (Ouicksilver)

## Servicing

(Prices from designxkr.co.uk, including VAT)

10,000 miles £252 40,000 mile (inc. belts & plugs) £442 Transmission oil change £335

## What to pay

The market is broad, and we've seen a 2006 4.2-litre XKR coupe with 65,000 miles on the clock for just £17.5k and a 2014 XKR-S convertible only 1000 miles old for £73.5k.

Sub-£30k, there's a wealth of cars on offer, and we even chanced upon a 44.000-mile 5-litre XKR-S coupe in that bracket! Five-litre XKRs are well within reach at this budget, although they're thin on the ground. If you're willing to sacrifice outright performance and don't mind high-ish miles (c80,000), then you'll be able to choose between reasonable numbers of 4.2-litre XKR coupes and convertibles for less than £25k.

## In the classifieds



## 2009 (09) 4.2-litre XKR coupe

- # 45.700 miles # FSH
- Five owners ■ New discs and pads
- pistonheads.co.uk

£19,000



## 2008 (58) 5-litre XKR coupe

- 36,000 miles Full JSH
- Two owners
- Heated/cooled seats manorsportsandprestige.co.uk

£29,990



## 2012 (12) 5-litre XKR-S coupe

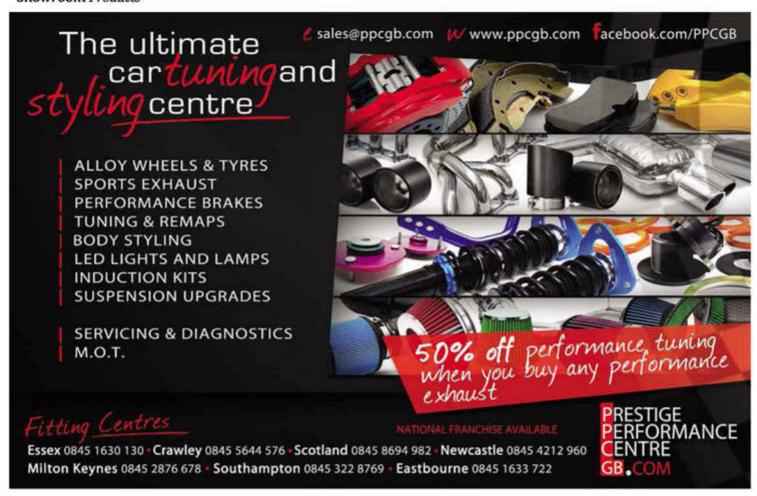
- **■** 50.000 miles
- **■** Full Jaguar history ■ Heated/cooled seats
- **■** junction17cars.co.uk

£49,975

Can feel a little clinical, yet is also extremely polished, capable and exceedingly quick. From £22,000.

## Useful contacts

- xkec.co.uk (club, forum)
- **■** jaguarownersclub.com (club, forum)
- **■** jaguarforum.com (forum)
- designxkr.co.uk (servicing)
- arden.de (tuning)
- spires-st.com (tuning, exhausts)







## VAS VEHICLE SOLUTIONS



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Small Decal option 4,000 miles 2009 £379,990



Lamborghini Diablo 6.0 VT Final Edition Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, Carbon Fibre Inserts Carbon Fibre Engine Bay, 20,000 miles, 2000, £164,990



Lamborghini Murcielago V12 LP640-4 Coupe 670 SV Body Upgrade DPE 20 Inch Forged Alloys TUBI Exhaust 5,000 miles 2008 £134,990 + VAT



Ferrari 599 GTB F1 LHD HIGH SPEC Full Electric Daytona Recaro Heated Seats, 20 Inch Monolithic Alloys, Yellow Rev Counter, 24,000 miles, 2006, £78,990



Ferrari 328 GTS ABS MODEL ABS, Full Leather, Air Conditioning, 38,000 miles, 1989 £84,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP670-4 SV Ceramic Brakes High Level Rear Wing Larini Sports Exhaust 5,000 miles 2009 £314,990+VAT



Lamborghini Murcielago V12 LP640 Coupe VAT QUALIFYING Ceramic Brakes, Carbon Fibre Inserts, Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, 6,000 miles, 2008 £149,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Roadstar LHD Titanium Hercules Alloys Yellow Brake Calipers Lifting Gear 10,000 miles 2008 £134,990



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Ferrari California F1 2+2 4.3 LHD HIGH SPEC Colour SatNav, Yellow Brake Calipers Scuderia Shields, 18,000 miles, 2009£85,990



Lamborghini Diablo Magnesium Wheels Jota Edition Unique Limited Edition 21,875 miles 1996 £324,990



Lamborghini Murcielago LP640 Roadster LHD HIGH SPEC Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, Clear Engine Bay Cover, Ceramic Brakes, 7,000 miles, 2009, £144,990



Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4 Spyder LHD Lifting Gear Reverse Carnera Full Electric Heated Seats 8,000 miles 2009 £104,990



Ferrari F430 Spider F1 HIGH SPEC Carbon Racing Seats, Carbon Fibre Driving Zone, Colour SatNav, 22,000 miles, 2008 £79,990



Ferrari 458 Spider LHD VAT QUALIFYING 20 inch Diamond Finish Sport Alloys, Colour SatNav, Scuderia Shields, 5,000 miles, 2012 £136,990 + VAT

## **BUYING OR SELLING LAMBORGHINI AUTOMOBILE'S**

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## **Auction watch**

## A classic Porsche raced by Sir Stirling Moss is the highlight of Bonhams' Goodwood sale







THERE'S AN ABSOLUTELY TOP-CLASS LINE-UP OF CARS AT THIS year's Bonhams Goodwood Festival of Speed sale, which takes place on June 26 at the legendary event.

The first of the UK-based auction house's major attractions is a particularly special Porsche. This 1961 781 RS-61 Sports-Racing (pictured top) was purchased by Sir Stirling Moss just days after his terrible lift shaft accident in 2010. You could say it was a deserved 'well get soon' present. Moss never raced this Porsche in period: it was originally bought in the USA, where it was raced by privateers in various East Coast events. After it was recently fully rebuilt by historic Porsche specialist Andy Prill, Moss drove it in a few historic events. However, following a particularly difficult race at the Le Mans Classic, he decided that he no longer wanted to take part in competitive events, making this the legendary driver's last ever racing car.

It's often difficult to put a price on something with a unique history, but the fact that this beautifully rebuilt car has played a significant role in Moss's story means it is estimated to sell for between £1.7m and £2m.

Another car with interesting provenance is a 1971 Citroën SM (above left) offered by its original owner, former Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman. Wyman used the SM in France during the '70s and it has covered surprisingly little mileage. In excellent condition, it is expected to go for £35,000-40,000.

Perhaps the most scintillating car in the sale, though, is a 1999 Mercedes-Benz CLK GTR Roadster (above right). One of just five built, this black example has covered a total of six kilometres from new. The GTR was one of the last of a breed of special homologation road cars, and was Mercedes' first midengined racer. It features a carbonfibre body, a 6.9-litre V12 with more than 600bhp, and a six-speed sequential gearbox. There aren't many cars that offer such an authentic Le Mans experience, but be prepared to pay for that privilege. Bonhams estimates that it will sell for £1.4m-1.8m.

Matthew Hayward (@evoMatthew)

## **Auction results**



## RM Auctions, May 2

2008 Porsche Cayman S track car \$71,500

2008 Shelby GT500 KR \$77.000

**2005 Ford GT** \$330,000

1990 Lamborghini Countach Anniversary \$451,000

**2008 Ferrari 599 GTB** \$214 500

1989 Porsche 911 Turbo (930)

\$126,500 **1989 Ferrari 328 GTS** \$93,500

**1989 Aston Martin DB2** \$1,320,000

## Bonhams, May 9

1990 Aston Martin Virage £23.000

2004 Aston Martin Vanquish £79 900

1962 Aston Martin DB4 Convertible

£1,513,500 **1984 Aston Martin Lagonda** £98,940

Covs. Ascot. May 16

1993 Porsche 911 Turbo (964) £72,360

1992 Ferrari 512TR

**1991 Alfa Romeo SZ** £28,320

1997 Porsche 993 Carrera 2 Targa

£31.860

## Auctionata, May 16

1983 Audi quattro prototype (pictured) €27 236

1978 Alpine A310 V6

€23,522 1972 BMW 3.0 CSL

€92,850

**1994 Porsche 968** €21,046

**1977 Ferrari 308 GTB** €105.230

1965 Corvette Stingray €49,520

## Auction calendar

## June 20

Bonhams Oxford, UK bonhams.com

## June 20

H&H Stamford, UK classic-auctions.com

## June 26

Bonhams Chichester, UK bonhams.com

## July 9

DVCA Dorchester, UK dvca.co.uk

## July 10-11

Vicari New Orleans, USA vicariauction.com

## July 11

Coys Blenheim Palace, UK coys.co.uk

## **July 15** Brightwells Leominster, UK

## brightwells.com July 28

Barons Esher, UK barons-auctions.com

## August 1

Coys

Nürburgring, Germany coys.co.uk

## Fantasy garage

Ultimate turbocharged 911s for £1million.
All can be found in the classifieds at classicandperformancecar.com



## Porsche 911 GT2 (993)

## £703,120

Homologation special with two turbos, 450bhp and rear-wheel drive.



## Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)

## £79,995

Need one 911 to cover every occasion? Then this is probably it.



## Porsche 911 Flatnose BTR

## £89,000

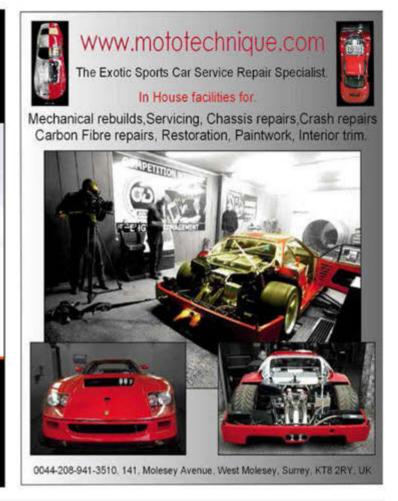
One-off Ruf-upgraded 1986 Flatnose puts out 374bhp. 0-60 in 4.4sec.













## Tried & Tested

Knowledge

The best motoring products, put through their paces by the **evo** team





You might expect a book covering the history of a racing outfit still in its infancy to be quite short. But despite Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus's mere two-year existence, WAFT's *Inside SCG 003* fills 512 pages with beautiful imagery and newly published quotes.

The book comes in two parts, offering readers the chance to explore the fascinating journey of a team charged

with creating a car fast enough to set a Nürburgring lap time of 6min 30sec. Only the first part is currently available; the second, which is included in the price, is due later this year.

The book certainly isn't cheap (much like the \$2.5 million car), but it provides a stunningly illustrated glimpse into the otherwise secretive world of Cameron Glickenhaus's automotive ambitions. **SS** 



## **MUC-OFF TYRE FOAM**

£8.00 muc-off.com

Someone somewhere presumably wishes their tyres smelled like strawberries. For that person, Muc-Off has created this Tyre Foam. Admittedly it's far more than a tyre perfume, because it also cleans your tyres. And it's pretty good at it too.

Simply spray it onto a tyre sidewall and leave it to work. A minute or so later the foam fades to reveal a shiny, like-new looking tyre wall. Prefer a matt finish? Just buff it off.

And we're not kidding about the smell: it also adds a (subjectively) delicious, bubble-gum strawberry scent. **SS** 



## RUST-OLEUM PEEL COAT £9.99 halfords.com

It sprays on like paint, dries like paint and even looks like paint. But it's not entirely like paint. Because rather than bonding with the surface it sits on, Peel Coat actually forms a removable coating.

It can be applied to wheels, body panels or glass surfaces in a matter of seconds. Four or five coats are recommended, and after it's been left to cure for 24 hours, the coating can be peeled off whenever you choose. You could say Peel Coat does exactly what it says on the tin... **SS** 



## **WAZE SOCIAL GPS**

## **Free** Apple App Store

The thing that sets Waze apart from many conventional satnavs and satnav apps is where it gets its information about traffic jams and incidents that you will likely want to avoid.

Every Waze user (of which there are many, forming a global community) contributes real-time road information automatically, just by driving with the app open. So if, for example, a large number of drivers using the app come to a halt in the same place, Waze can confidently predict to other users that there will be a delay at that point. Users can also actively report accidents, speed traps and other hazards.

The app also learns your preferred routes and allows you to search for the cheapest fuel on your journey. It's a driver's must-have companion.



## **DRIVEWALES** Tour

September 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> 2015



Discover Wales' most sought after roads and stay in a fantastic Spa Hotel. We limit the numbers so you don't get lost in the crowd. Our Tours are designed by petrol heads for petrol heads.

2 nights B&B - dinner on 2<sup>nd</sup> night – 2 tour guides – driver packs – hire of licensed walkie talkies – professional photography

The roads – The Black Mountains – Evo Triangle – Llanberis Pass – The Great
Orme – A4212 to Bala + more.

£315 per person

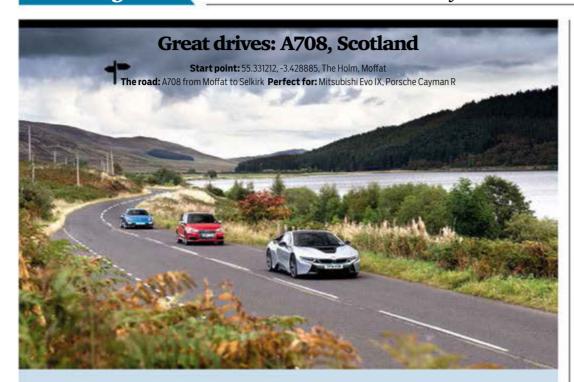
Book now - www.drivewales.com or call James - 07876206039



## Trips & Travel

Knowledge

The best destinations to visit in your car



JOHN LOUDON McADAM'S 'MACADAMISATION' OF ROADS was revolutionary, not just for the materials but for the addition of a crown (and therefore camber) to roads. allowing water to drain effectively. It is rather appropriate, therefore, that in 1836 he should have died in Moffat, a Borders town that is the start of two of the greatest driving roads in the country. Previously we have covered the A701 (evo 193), which goes almost due north; this time we're rhapsodising about the A708, which plots a course northeast.

Where the 701 dives straight into an interesting climb, the 708 takes a little longer to get going. It winds through fields, then narrows as it becomes flanked by trees, always tracked by a dry stone wall and the mostly unseen river of Moffat Water. Stick with it, though, because eventually the scenery expands and you head along a glorious valley. The road looks relatively straight on a map, but on the ground it is constantly wriggling and even more noticeably undulating. It has recently been resurfaced, but if anything this seems to have exacerbated some of the wicked crests and compressions. If you're not paying attention you can find air under your wheels or your sump gouging the tarmac.

The road finally reaches what feels like the head of the valley, climbing up and over before descending to the beautiful St Mary's Loch. The road is wider and more flowing here, giving a nice change of pace and character before the trees close in again on the final run to Selkirk.

The 708 is a real examination of both car and driver, with your ability to

read a road as important as the suspension's ability to show composure at the limits of its travel. I remember a Porsche Panamera being completely undone by it and only a handful of cars have ever really shone on the A708. It is a wonderful road and a true test.

> **Henry Catchpole** Features editor



## M The route



Start | Finish Distance: 32.5 miles Time: 56 minutes

## **M** Where to stay

As ever, if you're visiting the Borders and your budget will stretch, then we would heartily recommend the Roxburghe Hotel, where we've twice laid our weary heads during editions of eCoty If you wish to stay in a Guinness World Record-holding hotel, then the Star Hotel in Moffat is officially the narrowest detached hotel in the world

## Watch out for

With Scotland, you cannot play fast and loose with the weather. In winter there is likely to be snow and ice. Sheep also roam close to and occasionally on the remotest parts of the road so be aware. If you're looking for somewhere to stop, admire the view and have a bite to eat then we recommend the Glen Cafe by St Mary's Loch. Try a Tartan Burger.

For more driving destinations, visit: evo.co.uk/track-and-travel

## Reader road trip

## Alpine-Pyrenean blast

It's not until you drive through Europe that you realise how constrained we are in the UK. Driving on Autobahns and Swiss passes, it feels like the shackles are off. It's a feeling of freedom and adventure that a group of friends and I seek out annually, and last year seven cars - two Ferrari 458 Spiders, a 981 Cayman S, a BMW Z4M, an Alfa GTV, a Mégane and supercharged Audi S4 – took a road trip across eight countries in ten days.

It's tradition that our first stop is Stuttgart. The city is a great halfway point to St Moritz and boasts two of the best car museums in Furone: those of Mercedes and Porsche



With St Moritz as a base for two nights, we explored the main Swiss and Italian passes. including the obligatory Flüela and Stelvio (we all prefer the Bormio side), and discovered some new ones along the way, including the Albula Pass, which is awesome.

We then moved on to Martigny via the Nufenen and Ulrichen passes, staying for a night, before an amazing drive to Nice. A day covering some of the best mountain passes I've ever seen seemed to go by in no time at all.

Nice was another two-night stop. This time the cars were parked up and we indulged in the local bars before cruising up the coastal road to an overnight stop in the French Pyrenees. These offered a different experience to the Alps. Abandoned yet brand-new roads were a reflection of Spain's economic crisis and in contrast, investment from Europe.

After a superb day traversing the Pyrenees, including a border-stop in Andorra that saw drivers receiving obnoxiously large Top Gearstyle gifts to fit in their roadsters, we arrived in Jaca to seek out more Spanish passes before heading to Santander for the ferry home.

It's an experience I would recommend to anyone. Just book it and go. Crisp mountain air, enormous blue skies and smooth winding tarmac - epic!

## Richard Anderson

Email your story to henryc@evo.co.uk



Ratings ★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car

## Database

E = new entry this month. \* = grey import. Entries in italics are for cars no longer on sale. Issue no. is for our most recent major test of the car (D = Driven, R = Road test or group test, F = Feature). Call 0844 844 0039 to order a back issue. Price is on-the-road including VAT and delivery charges. Engine is the car's main motor only − additional hybrid tech isn't shown. Weight is the car's kerb weight as quoted by the manufacturer. bhp/ton is the power-to-weight ratio based on manufacturer's kerb weight. 0-60mph and 0-100mph figures in bold are independently recorded, all other performance figures are manufacturer's claims. CO2 g/km is the official EC figure and EC mpg is the official 'Combined' figure or equivalent.

## Knowledge

## Superminis / Hot Hatches

	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Abarth 595 Competizione	196 D	£18.960	4/1368	158/5500	170/3000	1035kg	155	7.4	-	130	155	43.5	+ Spirited engine, still looks great - Favours fun over finesse	***
Abarth 695 Biposto	205 R	£32,990	4/1369	187/5500	184/3000	997kg	191	5.9	-	143	-	-	+ Engineered like a true Abarth product - Desirable extras make this a £50k city car	***
Alfa Romeo Mito Cloverleaf	149 R	£18,870	4/1368	168/5500	184/2500	1145kg	149	7.5	-	136	139	47.1	+ Great MultiAir engine, impressive ride - Not as feisty as we hoped	***
Alfa Romeo Giulietta QV	199 D	£28,120	4/1742	237/5750	251/2000	1320kg	182	6.0	-	151	162	40.3	+ Still looks good, and now it's got the 4C's engine - Pricey, and it has more rewarding rivals	5 <b>**</b> *
Alfa Romeo Giulietta Cloverleaf	144 D	10-14	4/1742	232/5500	251/1900	1320kg	179	6.8	-	150	177	37.2	+ Shows signs of deep talentbut should be more exciting	***
Alfa Romeo 147 GTA	187 R	'03-'06	6/3179	247/6200	221/4800	1360kg	185	6.0	15.5	153	-	23.3	+ Mk1 Focus RS pace without the histrionics - Slightly nose-heavy	***
Audi S1	203 R	£24,900	4/1984	228/6000	273/1600	1315kg	176	5.8	-	155	162	40.4	+ Compliant and engaging chassis; quick, too - Looks dull without options	***
Audi A1 quattro	181 R	'13	4/1984	253/6000	258/2500	1420kg	181	5.7	-	152	199	32.8	+ Polished 253bhp all-wheel-drive A1 - Just 19 for UK, Porsche Cayman price	***
Audi S3	188 R	£30,640	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1395kg	216	5.4	12.5	155	162	40.4	+ Lots of grip and one of the best-sounding four-pot turbos - Still a little too clinical	***
Audi RS3	210 D	£39,950	5/2480	362/5500	343/1625	1520kg	242	4.3	-	155	189	34.9	+ Addictive noise, lighter on its feet than its predecessor - Still a shade sensible	***
Audi S3	106 R	'06-'12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1455kg	183	5.6	13.6	155	198	33.2	+ Very fast, very effective, very err, quality - A little too clinical	***
Audi RS3 Sportback	156 R	711-712	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1575kg	216	4.5	-	155	212	31.0	+ Above, with added five-pot character - Again, see above	***
BMW 125i M Sport	176 D	£26,020	4/1997	218/5000	228/1350	1420kg	156	6.4	-	155	154	42.8	+ Performance, price, running costs - Dull four-pot soundtrack	***
BMW M135i	195 R	£30,835	6/2979	316/5800	332/1300	1425kg	225	4.8	12.9	155	188	35.3	+ Powertrain, noise, chassis, price - M235i looks nicer, and has an LSD on its options list	***
BMW 130i M Sport	106 R	'05-'10	6/2996	261/6650	232/2750	1450kg	183	6.1	15.3	155	-	34.0	+ Fantastic engine - Suspension can still get a little boingy	***
Citroën C1/Peugeot 107/Toyota Aygo	126 R	£8095+	3/998	68/6000	68/3600	790kg	87	14.2	-	98	103	61.4	+ Full of character and insurance-friendly - Insurance friendly power	***
Citroën Saxo VTS	020 R	'97-'03	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	935kg	130	7.6	22.6	127	-	34.9	+ Chunky, chuckable charger - Can catch out the unwary	***
Citroën AX GT	195 R	'87-'92	4/1360	85/6400	86/4000	722kg	120	9.2	-	110	-	-	+ Makes terrific use of 85bhp - Feels like it's made from paper	**
Citroën DS3 1.6 THP	142 R	£17,475	4/1598	154/6000	177/1400	1240kg	126	7.2	-	133	155	42.2	+ A proper French hot hatch - Petrolheads might find it too 'designed'	**
Citroën DS3 Racing	153 D	'11-'12	4/1598	204/6000	203/2000	1240kg	167	6.5	-	146	149	-	+ Faster, feistier version of above - Not as hardcore as its 'Racing' tag suggests	**
Fiat Panda 100HP	132 R	'06-'11	4/1368	99/6000	97/4250	975kg	103	9.5	-	115	154	43.5	+ Most fun per pound on the market - Optional ESP can't be turned off	**
Fiat Punto Evo Sporting	141 D	£13,355	4/1368	133/5000	152/1750	1155kg	117	8.5	-	127	129	50.4	+ Great engine, smart styling - Dynamics don't live up to the Evo name	**
Ford Fiesta ST	207 R	£17,545	4/1596	179/5700	214/1600	1088kg	167	7.4	18.4	137	138	47.9	+ Chassis, price, punchy performance - Not as powerful as key rivals	**
Ford Fiesta ST Mountune	195 R	£18.144	4/1596	212/6000	236/2750	1088kg	198	6.4	-	140	138	-	+ One of the best mid-sized hatches made even better - Badge snobbery	**
Ford Fiesta Zetec S	123 D	'08-'13	4/1596	118/6000	112/4050	1045kg	115	9.9	-	120	134	48.7	+ Genuinely entertaining supermini - Grown up compared to Twingo/Swift	**
Ford Fiesta Zetec S Mountune	132 R	'08-'13	4/1596	138/6750	125/4250	1080kg	130	7.9	-	120	134	48.7	+ As above, with a fantastically loud exhaustif you're 12 years old	**
Ford Fiesta ST	075 D	'05-'08	4/1999	148/6000	140/4500	1137kg	132	7.9	-	129	-	38.2	+ Great looks, decent brakes - Disappointing chassis, gutless engine	**
Ford Fiesta ST185 Mountune	115 R	'08	4/1999	185/6700	147/3500	1137kg	165	6.9	-	129	-	-	+ Fiesta ST gets the power it always needed - OTT exhaust note	**
Ford Focus ST TDCi Estate	206 D	£23,295	4/1997	182/3500	295/2000	1488kg	124	8.3		135	110	67.3	+ Performance not sacrificed at the alter of economy - Interior design still jars slightly	**
Ford Focus ST	207 R	£22,195	4/1999	247/5500	265/2000	1362kg	184	6.5	-	154	159	41.5	+ Excellent engine - Scrappy when pushed	**
Ford Focus ST Mountune	187 D	£23,220	4/1999	271/5500	295/2750	1362kg	202	5.7		154+	169	-	+ Great value upgrade - Steering still not as feelsome as that of some rivals	**
Ford Focus ST	119 R	'05-'10	5/2522	222/6000	236/1600	1392kg	162	6.7	16.8	150	224	30.4	+ Value, performance, integrity - Big engine compromises handling	**
Ford Focus ST Mountune	137 R	'08-'11	5/2522	256/5500	295/2500	1392kg	187	5.8	14.3	155	224	30.4	+ ST takes extra power in its stride - You probably still want an RS	**
Ford Focus RS (Mk2)	195 R	'09-'11	5/2522	300/6500	324/2300	1467kg	208	5.9	14.2	163	225	30.5	+ Huge performance, highly capable FWD chassis - Body control is occasionally clumsy	**
Ford Focus RS500	193 R	10-11	5/2522	345/6000	339/2500	1467kg	239	5.6	12.7	165	225	30.3	+ More power and presence than regular RS - Pricey	**
Ford Focus RS (Mk1)	207 R	'02-'03	4/1998	212/5500	229/3500	1278kg	169	5.9	14.9	143	- 223		+ Some are great - Some are awful (so make sure you drive plenty)	**
	_	'92-'96	4/1998				179		14.9	137	-	_		
Ford Escort RS Cosworth	157 R 095 R	92-90	4/1993	224/6250 123/6300	224/3500 116/4500	1275kg		6.2 <b>8.6</b>	27.6	122	-	38.2	+ The ultimate Essex hot hatch - Unmodified ones are rare, and getting pricey	**
Ford Puma 1.7						1041kg	120						+ Everything - Nothing. The 1.4 is worth a look too	**
Ford Racing Puma	128 R	'00-'01	4/1679	153/7000	119/4500	1174kg	132	7.8	23.2	137	- 215	34.7	+ Exclusivity - The standard Puma does it so well	**
Honda Civic Type R	102 R	'07-'11	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.8	17.5	146	215	31.0	+ Looks great, VTEC more accessible - Steering lacks feel, inert balance	**
Honda Civic Type R Champ'ship White	126 D	'09-'10	4/1998	198/7800	142/5600	1267kg	158	6.6	-	146	-	31.0	+ Limited-slip diff a welcome addition - It's not available on standard car	**
Honda Civic Type R Mugen	195 R	'09-'11	4/1998	237/8300	157/6250	1233kg	195	5.9	-	155	-	-	+ Fantastic on road and track - There's only 20, and they're a tad pricey	**
Honda Civic Type R	075 R	'01-'05	4/1998	197/7400	145/5900	1204kg	166	6.8	16.9	146	-	31.7	+ Potent and great value - Looks divide opinion, duff steering	**
(ia Proceed GT	207 R	£20,200	4/1591	201/6000	195/1750	1448kg	143	7.4	-	143	171	38.2	+ Fun and appealing package - Lacks sharpness and control at its outer edges	**
ancia Delta Integrale	194 R	'88-'93	4/1995	207/5750	220/3500	1300kg	162	5.7	-	137	-	23.9	+ One of the finest cars ever built - Demands love, LHD only	**
Mazda 21.5 Sport	132 R	£13,495	4/1498	102/6000	101/4000	1030kg	107	10.4	-	117	135	48.7	+ Fun and funky - Feels tinny after a Mini	**
Mazda 3 MPS	137 R	'06-'13	4/2261	256/5500	280/3000	1385kg	188	6.3	14.5	155	224	29.4	+ Quick, eager and very good value - The steering's iffy	**
Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG	194 R	£37,845	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1480kg	244	4.3	10.6	155	161	40.9	+ Blisteringly quick everywhere - Not as rewarding as some slower rivals	**
MG3 Style	190 D	£9999	4/1498	104/6000	101/4750	1155kg	91	10.4	-	108	136	48.7	+ Decent chassis, performance and price - Thrashy engine, cheap cabin	**
MG Metro 6R4 Clubman	181 R	'84-'87	6/2991	250/7000	225/6500	1000kg	254	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ The most extreme hot hatch ever - Engine noise, heat soak, five mpg	**
fini Cooper (F56)	194 D	£15,300	3/1499	134/4500	162/1250	1085kg	125	7.9	-	130	105	62.8	+ Punchy three-cylinder engine, good chassis - Tubby styling	**
lini Cooper S (F56)	196 D	£18,665	4/1998	189/4700	206/1250	1160kg	166	6.8	-	146	133	49.6	+ Still has that Mini DNA - Expensive with options; naff dash displays	**
lini Cooper S 5-door (F56)	207 D	£19,440	4/1998	189/4700	206/1250	1220kg	148	6.9	-	144	136	47.9	+ Super engine, gearbox and brakes - Lacks some of the agility of the three-door	**
lini John Cooper Works Coupe (R58)	164 R	£23,805	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1175kg	180	6.3	-	149	165	39.8	+ The usual raucous Mini JCW experience - But with a questionable 'helmet' roof	**
fini Cooper (R56)	185 F	'09-'14	4/1598	120/6000	118/4250	1075kg	113	9.1	-	126	127	52.3	+ Brilliant ride and composure; could be all the Mini you need - You'll still buy the 'S'	**
Mini Cooper S (R56)	149 R	'06-'14	4/1598	181/5500	177/1600	1140kg	161	7.0		142	136	48.7	+ New engine, Mini quality - Front end not quite as direct as the old car's	**
fini Cooper SD (R56)	158 D	711-714	4/1995	141/4000	225/1750	1150kg	125	8.0		134	114	65.7	+ A quick diesel Mini with impressive mpg - But no Cooper S alternative	**
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	184 R	'08-'14	4/1598	208/6000	206/2000	1160kg	182	7.2	16.7	148	165	39.8	+ A quick dieser will il with intpressive ripg - but no cooper's alternative + A seriously rapid Mini - Occasionally just a little unruly	**
Mini John Cooper Works (R56)	195 R	13-14	4/1598	215/6000	206/2000		188	6.3	10.7	150	165	39.8	+ Brazenly hyperactive - Too much for some roads and some tastes	**
Mini Cooper S (R50)	077R	'02-'06	4/1598	168/6000	155/4000	1160kg	143	7.8	19.9	135		33.6	+ Brazeniy nyperactive - 100 much for some roads and some tastes + Strong performance, quality feel - Over-long gearing	**
	0//R 144 R	'06	4/1598	215/7100	184/4600	1140kg	200	6.5	19.9	135	-	33.6		
Mini Cooper S Works GP (R50)						1090kg			-		165		+ Storming engine, agility - Tacky styling 'enhancements'	**
Nissan Juke Nismo RS	208 D	£21,650	4/1618	215/6000	206/3600	1315kg	166	7.0	-	137	165	39.2	+ Quirky character and bold styling - Not a match for a pukka hot hatch	**
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 2)		'97-'98	4/1587	103/6200	97/3500	865kg	121	8.8	-	121	-	34.0	+ Bargain no-frills thrills - Not as much fizz as original 1.3	**





★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



**Our Choice**Volkswagen Golf R. A flagship Golf to get *really* excited about, the new R offers immense pace and a truly engaging driving experience in a compromise-free package with class and quality aplenty. It's now available as an estate, too.



**Best of the Rest**The SEAT Leon Cupra 280 is a real buzz to thread along a tough road, but the Mégane 275 edges it for tactility and involvement. Amongst the smaller hatches, Peugeot's 208 GTi 30th (left) is fabulously focused, while the Fiesta ST is the affordable choice.

## Superminis / Hot Hatches

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Peugeot 106 Rallye (Series 1)	095 R	'94-'96	4/1294	100/7200	80/5400	826kg	123	10.6		118	-	35.6	+ Frantic, thrashy fun - Needs caning to extract full potential	****
Peugeot 106 GTI 16v	034 R	'97-'04	4/1587	120/6600	107/5200	950kg	128	7.4	22.2	127	-	34.9	+ Fine handling supermini - Looks its age	****
Peugeot 208 GTi	184 R	£18,895	4/1598	197/5800	203/1700	1160kg	173	6.8	17.9	143	125	47.9	+ Agile chassis works well on tough roads - Could be more involving	***
Peugeot 208 GTi 30th Anniversary	207 R	£21,995	4/1598	205/5800	221/1750	1185kg	176	6.5	-	143	125	47.9	+ The most focused and aggressive small hatch on sale - £5k more than a Fiesta ST	****
Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9	195 R	'88-'91	4/1905	130/6000	119/4750	910kg	145	7.9	-	124	-	36.7	+ Still scintillating after all these years - Brittle build quality	****
Peugeot 306 GTI 6	020 R	'93-'01	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1215kg	139	7.2	20.1	140	-	30.1	+ One of the great GTIs - They don't make them like this any more	****
Peugeot 306 Rallye	095 R	'98-'99	4/1998	167/6500	142/5500	1199kg	142	6.9	19.2	137	-	30.1	+ Essentially a GTI-6 for less dosh - Limited choice of colours	****
Renaultsport Twingo 133	175 R	'08-'13	4/1598	131/6750	118/4400	1050kg	127	8.6	-	125	150	43.5	+ Renaultsport experience for pocket money - Optional Cup chassis gives bouncy ride	****
Renaultsport Clio 200 Turbo	184 R	£18.995	4/1618	197/6000	177/1750	1204kg	166	6.9	17.9	143	144	44.8	+ Faster, more refined, easier to drive - We miss the revvy nat-asp engine and manual 'box	
Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup	195 R	'09-'13	4/1998	197/7100	159/5400	1204kg	166	6.6	16.7	141	190	34.5		****
Renaultsport Clio 197 Cup	115 R	'07-'09	4/1998	194/7250	158/5550	1240kg	161	6.9	-	134	-	33.6	+ Quick, polished and capable - Not as much sheer fun as 182 Cup	***
Renaultsport Clio 182	066 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1110kg	165	6.6	17.5	139	-	34.9	+ Took hot hatches to a new level - Flawed driving position	****
Renaultsport Clio 182 Cup	187 R	'04-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.5	-	139	-	34.9	+ Full of beans, fantastic value - Sunday-market upholstery	****
Renaultsport Clio Trophy	200 R	'05-'06	4/1998	180/6500	148/5250	1090kg	168	6.6	17.3	140	-	34.9	+ The most fun you can have on three (sometimes two) wheels - Just 500 were built	****
Renaultsport Clio 172 Cup	048 R	'02-'04	4/1998	170/6250	147/5400	1011kg	171	6.5	17.7	138	-	-	+ Bargain old-school hot hatch - Nervous in the wet, no ABS	***
Renaultsport Clio V6 255	057 R	'03-'05	6/2946	251/7150	221/4650	1400kg	182	5.8	-	153	-	23.0	+ Supercar drama without the original's edgy handling - Uninspired interior	****
Renaultsport Clio V6	029 R	'99-'02	6/2946	227/6000	221/3750	1335kg	173	5.8	17.0	145	-	23.0	+ Pocket supercar- Mid-engined handling can be tricky	***
Renault Clio Williams	195 R	'93-'96	4/1988	148/6100	126/4500	981kg	153	7.6	20.8	134	-	26.0	+ One of the best hot hatches ever - Can be fragile	****
Renault 5 GT Turbo	195 R	'87-'91	4/1397	118/5750	122/3000	855kg	140	7.3	-	120	-	28.4	+ Clio Williams' grand-daddy - Few unmodified ones left	****
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	195 R	£25,990	4/1998	261/5500	265/3000	1387kg	191	6.4	14.8	158	174	37.7	+ A hot hatch benchmark - Not a lot	****
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy	201 D	£28,930	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1376kg	200	6.0	-	158	174	37.7	+ Another cracking Trophy model - Stripped-out Trophy-R is even more thrilling	****
Renaultsport Mégane 275 Trophy-R	203 R	£36,430	4/1998	271/5500	265/3000	1297kg	212	5.8		158	174	37.7	+ As absorbing as a 911 GT3 RS on the right road - Too uncompromising for some; pricey	****
Renaultsport Mégane 250 Cup	139 R	'09-'12	4/1998	247/5500	251/3000	1387kg	181	6.1	14.6	156	190	34.4	+ Fantastic chassispartially obscured by new-found maturity	****
Renaultsport Mégane dCi 175 Cup	119 R	'07-'09	4/1995	173/3750	265/2000	1470kg	119	8.3	23.5	137	-	43.5		***
Renaultsport Mégane 230 F1 Team R26	195 R	'07-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1345kg	171	6.2	16.0	147	-	-	+ The car the R26.R is based on - F1 Team stickers in dubious taste	****
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	200 R	'08-'09	4/1998	227/5500	229/3000	1220kg	189	5.8	15.1	147	-	-	+ One of the true hot hatch heroes - Two seats, plastic rear windows	****
SEAT Ibiza FR 2.0 TDI	144 R	£17,445	4/1968	141/4200	236/1750	1245kg	115	8.2	-	131	123	60.1	+ More fun than the petrol FR, manual gearbox option - The Cupra's not much more	****
SEAT Ibiza Cupra	183 D	£18,765	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1259kg	144	6.9		142	139	47.9	+ Punchy engine, unflappable DSG - Lacks engagement	***
SEAT Leon FR TDI 184	184 D	£22,255	4/1968	181/4000	280/1750	1350kg	136	7.5	-	142	112	64.2	+ Performance, sweet chassis, economy, comfort - Boorish engine	***
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	195 R	£27,233	4/1984	276/5600	258/1750	1320kg	212	5.8		155	149	44.1	+ Serious pace and agility for Golf GTI money - The Mk7 Golf R	****
SEAT Leon FR+	163 D	71-12	4/1984	208/5300	206/1700	1334kg	158	7.2		145	170	38.7	+ As quick as a Golf GTI five-door but lots cheaper - Misses the VW's completeness	****
SEAT Leon Cupra R	139 R	10-12	4/1984	261/6000	258/2500	1375kg	193	6.1	14.0	155	190	34.9	+ Bold car, blinding engine - Lacks the character of its rival mega-hatches	***
SEAT Leon Cupra	105 R	'07-'11	4/1984	237/5700	221/2200	1375kg	175	6.3	14.0	153	190	34.0		****
SEAT Leon Cupra R 225	067R	'03-'06	4/1781	222/5900	206/2200	1376kg	164	6.9		150	-	32.1	+ Cross-country pace, practicality, value - Not as thrilling as some	****
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk2)	146 D	£17.150	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1218kg	148	7.3		139	148	45.6	+ Well priced, well made, with great engine and DSG 'box - Dull steering	****
Skoda Fabia vRS (Mk1)	077 R	'04-'07	4/1896	130/4000	229/1900	1315kg	100	9.6		127	-	55.4	+ Fascinatingly fun and frugal hot hatch - A little short on steering feel	***
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk3)	187 D	£23,260	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1350kg	163	6.8		154	142	45.6	+ Quick, agile, roomier than a Golf - Ride is harsh for what could be a family car	***
Skoda Octavia vRS (Mk2)	163 R	'06-'13	4/1998	197/5100	206/1700	1395kg	143	7.3	-	149	175	37.7	+ Drives like a GTI but costs much less - Green brake calipers?	****
Smart Fortwo Brabus	110 D	£15,375	3/999	97/5500	104/3500		126	9.9	-	96	119	54.3		
Subaru Impreza WRXS	125 D	'08-'10	4/2457	251/5400	288/3000	780kg 1395kg	180	5.5		130	270	34.3	+ Telling people you drive a Brabus - Them realising it's not a 720bhp S-class + An improvement over the basic WRX - Still not the WRX we wanted	****
		'08-10	4/2457	325/5400	347/3400				-	155	2/0			****
Subaru Impreza STI 330S	124 R 175 R	£13.749	4/245/	134/6900		1505kg 1045kg	219 130	4.4 8.7	-	121	147	//1	+ A bit quicker than the STIbut not better	****
Suzuki Swift Sport (Mk2) Suzuki Swift Sport	132 R	105-11	4/1586	123/6800	118/4400 109/4800		121	8.9	-	121	165	44.1 39.8	+ The Swift's still a great pocket rocket - But it's lost a little adjustability + Entertaining handling, well built - Lacking in steering feedback	****
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	210 D	£17.995	4/1588	202/5800	206/1900	1030kg 1278kg	161	6.5		143	174	37.7	+ Enter taining nanoling, well built - Lacking in steering reedback + Begs to be wrung out - You'll need the £2400 Performance Pack	***
Vauxhall Corsa VXR	154 R	'07-'14	4/1598	189/5850	192/1980	1166kg	165	6.8	-	140	172	38.7		
Vauxhall Corsa VXR N'ring/Clubsport	164 R	71-73/74	4/1598	202/5750	206/2250	1166kg	176	6.5		143	178	30.7	+ Looks snazzy, punchy engine - Lacks feel, uncouth compared with rivals + VXR gets more power and a limited-slip diff - But they come at a price	***
		£27.315	4/1998						_			2/0		****
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk2)	207 R	£27,315 '05-'11		276/5500	295/2500	1475kg	190	5.9		155 152	184 221	34.9	+ Better than the car it replaces; loony turbo pace - Lacks RS Mégane's precision	***
Vauxhall Astra VXR (Mk1)	102 R		4/1998	237/5600	236/2400	1393kg	173	6.7	16.7			30.7	+ Fast and furious - Lacks a little composure and precision	***
VW Up/SEAT Mii/Skoda Citigo	171 R	£7990+	3/999	59/5000	70/3000	854kg	70	14.1	-	99	105	62.8	+ Accomplished city car is dynamically soundbut predictably slow	****
VW Polo GTI	206 D	£18,850	4/1798	189/4200	236/1450	1280kg	150	6.7	-	146	139	47.1	+ At last, a real live 'n' kicking baby Golf GTI - Fiesta ST is still more engaging	***
VW Polo GTI	154 R	'10-'14	4/1390	178/6200	184/2000	1184kg	153	6.8	-	142	139	47.9	+ Modern-day mk1 Golf GTI gets twin-clutch DSG - It's a little bit bland	***
VW Golf GTD (Mk7)	200 D	£25,765	4/1968	181/3500	280/1750	1377kg	134	7.5	-	143	109	67.3	+ Pace, fuel economy, sounds good for a diesel - Lacks the extra edge of the GTI	***
VW Golf GTI (Mk7)	207 R	£26,580	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1351kg	163	6.5	-	153	139	47.1	+ Brilliantly resolved - Mégane 265 beats it as a pure drivers' car	****
VW Golf GTE (Mk7)	202 D	£28,000	4/1395	201	258	1524kg	134	7.6	-	138	35	188.0		***
VW Golf R (Mk7)	203 R	£29,900	4/1984	297/5500	280/1800	1476kg	204	5.1	-	155	165	40.9	+ Time to take the R brand seriously - Mégane 265 just edges it as a pure drivers' car	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk6)	172 R	'09-'13	4/1984	207/5300	207/1700	1318kg	160	6.4	16.5	148	170	38.7	+ Still a very accomplished hot hatch - 207bhp isn't a lot any more	***
VW Golf R (Mk6)	140 D	70-73	4/1984	266/6000	258/2500	1521kg	178	5.5	-	155	199	33.2	+ Great engine, tremendous pace and poise - High price, ACC only optional	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk5)	195 R	'04-'09	4/1984	197/5100	207/1800	1336kg	150	6.7	17.9	145	-	-	+ Character and ability: the GTI's return to form - Lacking firepower?	****
VW Golf R32 (Mk5)	087 R	'06-'09	6/3189	246/6300	236/2500	1510kg	165	5.8	15.2	155	-	26.4	+ Traction's great and you'll love the soundtrack - We'd still have a GTI	***
VW Golf R32 (Mk4)	053 R	'02-'04	6/3189	237/6250	236/2800	1477kg	163	6.4	16.3	154	-	24.6		****
VW Golf GTI 16v (Mk2)	195 R	'88-'92	4/1781	139/6100	124/4600	960kg	147	7.9	-	129	-	26.6	+ Still feels everyday useable - Very hard to find a standard one	****
VW Golf GTI (Mk1, 1.8)	095 R	'82-'84	4/1781	112/5800	109/3500	840kg	135	8.1	-	112	-	36.0	+ The car that started it all - Tricky to find an unmolested one	****
Volvo C30 T5 R-Design	122 R	'08-'12	5/2521	227/5000	236/1500	1347kg	165	6.6	16.9	149	203	32.5	+ Good-looking, desirable Volvo - Lacks edge of best hatches. Avoid auto	***

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★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



Our Choice
BMW M5. The turbocharging of BMW's M-cars met with scepticism, but the current M5's 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 feels a perfect fit. It's a brutally fast car, and there are clever (and useable) adjustable driving modes. The '30 Jahre' special edition, which has an extra 40bhp, is especially worth a look.



Best of the Rest
Mercedes' E63 AMG offers intoxicating performance, especially
with the Supgrade (pictured). BMW's M3 is an appealing allround package, but its C63 AMG rival has more approachable limits. Meanwhile, the latest Alpina D3 Biturbo is not only the world's fastest diesel production car, but a great handler too.

## Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Alpina D3 Biturbo (F30)	192 D	£46.950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6		173	139	53.3	+ 173mph from a 3-litre diesel! Brilliant chassis, too - Auto only	****
Alpina B3 Biturbo (F30)	188 D	£54,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1610kg	255	4.2	-	190	177	37.2	+ Understated appearance, monster performance - E90 M3 is better on the limit	****
Alpina D3 (E90)	120 R	'08-'12	4/1995	211/4000	332/2000	1495kg	143	6.9	-	152	-	52.3	+ Excellent chassis, turbodiesel oomph - Rather narrow powerband	***
Alpina B5 Biturbo	149 D	£75.150	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	1920kg	282	4.5	-	198	244	26.9	+ Big performance and top-line luxury - Driver not really involved	***
Alpina B7 Biturbo	134 D	£98.800	8/4395	533/5200	538/2800	2040kg	265	4.6	-	194	230	28.5	+ Massive performance and top-line luxury - Feels its weight when hustled	***
Aston Martin Rapide S	201 D	£147,950	12/5935	552/6650	465/5500	1990kg	282	4.2	_	203	300	21.9	+ Oozes star quality; gearbox on 2015MY cars a big improvement - It's cosy in the back	***
Aston Martin Rapide	141 R	10-13	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1990kg	240	5.2	_	188	355	-	+ Better than its DB9 sibling - More a 2+2 than a proper four-seater	***
Audi S3 Saloon	192 D	£33.540	4/1984	296/5500	280/1800	1430kg	210	5.3	_	155	162	26.4	+ On paper a match for the original S4 - In reality much less interesting	***
Audi S4 (B8)	166 D	£39,610	6/2995	328/5500	324/2900	1685kg	198	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Great powertrain, secure chassis - The new RS4 is here now	***
Audi S4 (B7)	073 D	'05-'08	8/4163	339/7000	302/3500	1700kg	206	5.4	-	155	190	34.9	+ Effortless V8, agile handling - Lacks ultimate finesse of class leaders	***
Audi RS4 Avant (B8)	192 R	£56.545	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1795kg	251	4.5	10.5	174	249	26.4	+ Looks and sounds the part, thunderously fast - Harsh ride, unnatural steering	***
Audi RS4 (B7)	088 R	'06-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1650kg	255	4.5	10.5	155	249	20.4	+ 414bhp at 7800rpm! And there's an estate version too - Busy under braking	
											-			***
Audi RS4 (B5)	192 R	'00-'02	6/2671	375/6100	325/2500	1620kg	236	4.8	12.1	170	-	17.0	+ Effortless pace - Not the last word in agility. Bends wheel rims	***
Audi RS2	101 R	'94-'95	5/2226	315/6500	302/3000	1595kg	201	4.8	13.1	162	-	18.0	+ Storming performance (thanks to Porsche) - Try finding one	***
Audi S6	091D	'06-'11	10/5204	429/6800	398/3000	1910kg	228	5.2	-	155	299	22.4	+ Even faster, and discreet with it - Very muted V10	***
Audi RS6 Avant (C7)	203 R	£77,995	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1935kg	290	3.6	8.2	155	229	28.8	+ Performance, foolproof powertrain, looks - Feels a bit one-dimensional	***
Audi RS6 Avant (C6)	116 R	'08-'10	10/4991	572/6250	479/1500	2025kg	287	4.3	9.7	155	333	20.2	+ The world's most powerful estate - Power isn't everything	***
Audi RS6 Avant (C5)	052 R	'02-'04	8/4172	444/5700	413/1950	1865kg	242	4.8	11.6	155	-	19.3	+ The ultimate estate car? - Numb steering	***
Audi RS7	208 R	£84,480	8/3993	552/5700	516/1750	1920kg	292	3.9	-	155	229	28.8	+ Stonking performance, great looks - Numb driving experience	***
Audi S7	171 D	£63,375	8/3993	414/5000	406/1400	1945kg	216	4.6	-	155	225	-	+ Looks and drives better than S6 it's based on - Costs £8000 more	***
Audi S8	164 D	£80,690	8/3993	513/5800	479/1700	1975kg	264	4.1	-	155	237	27.7	+ Quicker and much more economical than before - But still underwhelming to drive	***
Audi RS Q3	206 D	£45,495	5/2480	335/5300	332/1600	1655kg	206	4.8	-	155	203	32.1	+ Surprisingly characterful; better than many RSs - High centre of gravity	***
Bentley Flying Spur V8	200 D	£142,800	8/3997	500/6000	487/1700	2342kg	217	4.9	-	183	254	25.9	+ Effortless performance with real top-end kick - Determinedly unsporting	***
Bentley Flying Spur	185 D	£153.300	12/5998	616/6000	590/1600	2400kg	261	4.3	-	200	343	19.0	+ More power than old Flying Spur Speed - Feels its weight; engine sounds dull	****
Bentley Mulsanne	178 F	£229,360	8/6752	505/4200	752/1750	2610kg	197	5.1	-	184	342	19.3	+ Drives like a modern Bentley should - Shame it doesn't look like one too	***
Bentley Mulsanne Speed	210 D	£252,000	8/6752	530/4200	811/1750	2610kg	206	4.8	-	190	342	19.3	+ Characterful; superb build quality - A bit pricey	***
BMW 320d (F30)	168 R	£29,475	4/1995	181/4000	280/1750	1495kg	123	7.4	-	146	120	61.4	+ Fleet-friendly new Three is economical yet entertaining - It's a tad noisy	***
BMW 328i (F30)	165 D	£30,470	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1430kg	172	5.8	-	155	149	44.8	+ New-age four-pot 328i is great all-rounder - We miss the six-cylinder soundtrack	***
BMW 330d M Sport (F30)	180 D	£36,975	6/2993	254/4000	413/2000	1540kg	168	5.6		155	129	57.6	+ Great engine, fine handling, good value - Steering confuses weight with feel	***
BMW 435i Gran Coupe	203 D	£41,865	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1585kg	194	5.5	-	155	174	34.9	+ Superb straight-six, fine ride/handling balance - 335i saloon weights and costs less	***
BMW M3 (F80)	203 D	£56,590	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1520kg	284	4.1	8.6	155	204	32.1		****
		108-111							10.7	165	290	22.8	+ Looks, performance, practicality - On-limit body control; engine lacks character	***
BMW M3 (E90)	123 R		8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1605kg	262	4.9					+ Every bit as good as the E92 M3 coupe - No carbon roof	
BMW M3 CRT (E90)	179 R	'11-'12	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1580kg	285	4.4	-	180	295	-	+ Saloon chassis + weight savings + GTS engine = best E90 M3 - Just 67 were made	***
BMW 528i (F10)	164 D	£36,570	4/1997	242/5000	258/1250	1710kg	144	6.2	-	155	152	41.5	+ Four-pot 528 is downsizing near its best - You'll miss the straight-six sound effects	***
BMW 535i (F10)	141 D	£44,560	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1685kg	182	6.1	-	155	185	34.9	+ New 5-series impresses But only with all the chassis options ticked	***
BMW M5 (F10M)	208 R	£73,960	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1870kg	300	4.3	-	155	232	28.5	+ Twin-turbocharging suits all-new M5 well - Can feel heavy at times	***
BMW M5 (E60)	129 R	'04-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1755kg	289	4.7	10.4	155	-	19.6	+ Close to being the ultimate supersaloon - SMG gearbox feels old-tech	***
BMW M5 (E39)	110 R	'99-'03	8/4941	394/6600	369/3800	1795kg	223	4.9	11.5	155	-	-	+ Magnificent V8-engined supersaloon - We'd be nit-picking	***
BMW M5 (E34)	110 R	'92-'96	6/3795	340/6900	295/4750	1653kg	209	5.9	13.6	155	-	-	+ The Godfather of supersaloons - The family can come too	***
BMW M5 (E28)	182 R	'86-'88	6/3453	282/6500	251/4500	1431kg	200	6.2	-	151	-	-	+ The original storming saloon- Understated looks	***
BMW M6 Gran Coupe	190 D	£98,145	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1875kg	299	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	+ Enormous performance, stylish looks - Price tag looks silly next to rivals, M5 included	***
BMW X5 M50d	191 D	£64.020	6/2993	376/4000	546/2000	2190kg	155	5.3	-	155	177	42.2	+ Straight-line pace - Driving experience identical to standard X5, despite the M badge	***
BMW X6 xDrive 50i	118 D	£63,065	8/4395	408/5500	442/1750	2190kg	186	5.4	-	155	292	22.6	+ Stunningly good to drive - Will you want to be seen arriving?	****
BMW X6M	134 D	£93,070	8/4395	547/6000	502/1500	2305kg	241	4.7	-	171	325	20.3	+ Fast, refined and comfortable - But it definitely lacks the M factor	***
BMW 750i	174 D	£71,575	8/4395	449/5500	480/2000	2020kg	226	4.7	-	155	199	-	+ Well specced, impressively refined - Lags far behind the Mercedes S-class	***
Brabus Bullit	119 R	c£330.000	12/6233	720/5100	811/2100	1850kg	395	3.8	-	217	-	-	+ Seven hundred and twenty bhp - Three hundred thousand pounds	***
Cadillac CTS-V	148 R	£67,030	8/6162	556/6100	551/3800	1928kg	293	3.9	-	191	365	18.1	+ It'll stand out among M-cars and AMGs - But the novelty might wear off	***
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4	140 R	'90-'93	4/1993	220/6250				6.6	-	144	- 303	24.4		****
	141 K				214/3500	1305kg	159		-		-	24.4	+ Fast and furious - Try finding a straight one	
Ford Sierra RS Cosworth	040.0	'86-'90	4/1993	204/6000	204/4500	1220kg	169	6.2		143			+ Roadgoing Group A racecar - Don't shout about the power output!	***
Honda Accord Type R	012 R	'99-'03	4/2157	209/7200	158/6700	1306kg	163	6.1	17.4	142	-	29.4	+ One of the finest front-drivers of all time - Lack of image	***
Infiniti Q50S Hybrid	195 D	£39,995	6/3498	359/6800	402/5000	1750kg	208	5.1	-	155	144	45.6	+ Good powertrain, promising chassis - Lacklustre steering, strong rivals	***
Jaguar XES	210 D	£44,865	6/2995	335/6500	332/4500	1590kg	214	4.9	-	155	194	34.9	+ Great chassis, strong powertrain - Tight in the back	***
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 Diesel S	145 D	£46,615	6/2993	271/4000	443/2000	1695kg	162	5.9	-	155	159	47.1	+ Sweet handling plus diesel economy - But we'd still have the R	****
Jaguar XF 3.0 V6 Supercharged	178 D	£48,510	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1695kg	201	5.7	-	155	224	29.4	+ Fast, comfortable, refined - Bland engine, poor economy compared to diesel V6	***
Jaguar XFR	181 D	£65,440	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1800kg	284	4.8	10.2		270	24.4	+ Brilliant blend of pace and refinement - Doesn't sound as special as it is	***
Jaguar XFR-S	208 R	£79,995	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1912kg	288	4.4	-	186	270	24.4	+ XF gets turned up to 12 - Starting to feel its age	***
Jaguar XFR-S Sportbrake	203 R	£82,495	8/5000	542/6500	501/2500	1967kg	280	4.6	-	186	297	22.2	+ Looks fantastic, huge performance, nice balance - Not as sharp as the saloon	***
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Diesel	148 D	£56,870	6/2993	271/4000	442/2000	1700kg	162	6.0	-	155	167	46.3	+ A great Jaguar - But not as great as the XJR	***
Jaguar XJR	191 D	£92,395	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1805kg	302	4.4	_	174	270	24.4	+ Hot-rod vibe, fine cabin - Opinion-dividing looks	***



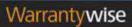












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## Saloons / Estates / 4x4s

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Jaguar XJR	054 R	'03-'09	8/4196	400/6100	408/3500	1665kg	244	5.0	_	155	-	23.0	+ Genuine 7-series rival - 2007 facelift didn't help middle-aged image	****
Land Rover Discovery Sport	205 D	£32,395	4/2179	187/3500	310/1750	1863kg	100	9.8	-	117	159	46.3	+ Style, packaging, refinement - Will need to prove Sport tag in UK	***
Lexus IS F	151 R	'07-'12	8/4969	417/6600	372/5200	1714kg	247	4.7		173	270	24.4	+ Shockingly good Lexus - The M3's available as a (second hand) four-door too	***
Lotus Carlton	170 R	'91-'93	6/3615	377/5200	419/4200	1658kg	231	4.8		176	-	17.0	+ The Millennium Falcon of saloon cars - Every drive a work-out	****
Maserati Ghibli	186 D	£52,615	6/2979	325/5000	406/1750	1810kg	182	5.6	-	163	223	29.4	+ Bursting with character; good value compared to Quattroporte - It's still a big car	****
Maserati Ghibli S	198 D	£63,760	6/2979	404/5500	406/4500	1810kg	227	5.0	-	177	242	27.2	+ Stands out from the crowd; sounds good too - Chassis lacks finesse, engine lacks reach	***
Maserati Quattroporte S	184 D	£80,115	6/2979	404/5500	406/1750	1860kg	221	5.1	-	177	242	27.2	+ Tempting alternative to V8 - Feel-free steering, secondary ride lacks decorum	***
Maserati Quattroporte GTS	179 D	£108,185	8/3798	523/6800	479/2250	1900kg	280	4.7	-	190	274	23.9	+ Performance, sense of occasion - Lacks the charisma and edge of its predecessor	***
Maserati Quattroporte S	137 R	'08-'12	8/4691	425/7000	361/4750	1990kg	216	5.1	12.1	174	365	18.0	+ A QP with the bhp it deserves - Grille is a bit Hannibal Lecter	***
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	141 R	'08-'12	8/4691	433/7000	361/4750	1990kg	221	5.1	-	177	365	18.0	+ The most stylish supersaloon - Slightly wooden brakes, unforgiving ride	***
Maserati Quattroporte	085 R	'04-'08	8/4244	394/7000	333/4500	1930kg	207	5.1	-	171	-	17.9	+ Redefines big-car dynamics - Don't use auto mode	***
Maserati Quattroporte Sport GTS	113 D	'07-'08	8/4244	396/7000	339/4250	1930kg	208	5.5	-	167	-	-	+ Best Quattroporte chassis so far - More power wouldn't go amiss	***
Mercedes-Benz 190E 2.5-16	185 F	'89-'92	4/2498	201/6750	177/5500	1360kg	147	7.2	-	142	-	24.4	+ M-B's M3 alternative - Not as nimble as the Beemer	***
Mercedes-Benz CLA45 AMG	186 D	£42,270	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.6	-	155	161	31.0	+ Strong performance, classy cabin - Pricey compared to A45 AMG hatchback	***
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	205 R	£44,595	4/1991	355/6000	332/2250	1510kg	239	4.8	-	155	175	37.7	+ An aggressive and focused sports crossover - Low on driver interaction	***
Mercedes-AMG C63	209 D	£59,800	8/3982	469/5500	479/1750	1640kg	291	4.1	-	155	192	34.5	+ Fast and feelsome - Lacks the ultimate finesse and response of the C63 S	****
Mercedes-AMG C63 S	208 D	£66,545	8/3982	503/5500	516/1750	1655kg	309	4.0	- 0.7	155	192	34.5	+ Tremendous twin-turbo V8 power - Not quite as focused as an M division car	***
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG	151 R	'07-'14	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	9.7	160	280	23.5	+ Monstrous pace and extremely engaging - Same-era M3 is just a little better	***
Mercedes-Benz C55 AMG	088 R	'04-'08	8/5439	367/5250	376/4000	1635kg	228	5.2	-	155	220	23.7	+ Furiously fast, commendably discreet - Overshadowed by M3 and RS4	***
Mercedes-AMG E63 Mercedes-AMG E63 S	187 D 208 R	£74,115 £84,710	8/5461 8/5461	549/5500 577/5500	531/1750 590/1750	1770kg 1795kg	315 327	4.2		155 155	230 229	28.8	+ Power, response and accuracy in spades - A little lacking in originality + Effortless power; intuitive and approachable - Dim-witted auto 'box	****
		11-73	8/5461	518/5250	590/1750	1795kg 1765kg	298	4.1	-	155	230	28.8		
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	165 R 134 D	'09-'11	8/5461	518/5250	465/5200	1765kg	298	4.2	-	155	230 295	22.4	+ Turbo engine doesn't dilute E63 experience - Sometimes struggles for traction + As below, but with an extra 11bhp and squarer headlights - Steering still vague	****
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	096 D	'06-'09	8/6208	507/6800	465/5200		292	4.5	-	155	-	19.8		
Mercedes-Benz E55 AMG	090 D 052 R	'03-'06	8/5439	476/6100	516/2650	1765kg 1760kg	292	4.8		155	-	21.9	+ Brilliant engine, indulgent chassis - Vague steering, speed limits + M5-humbling grunt, cosseting ride - Speed limits	****
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG L	191 D	£119,835	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.4	10.2	155	237	27.9	+ Mo-numbling grunt, cossetting ride - Speed Ilmits + Monster pace - Average steering feel	****
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG	148 D	70-73	8/5461	536/5500	590/2000	2040kg	267	4.5	-	155	244	26.9	+ Massive torque, massively reduced emissions - Massive car	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG S	199 D	£86,500	8/5461	577/5500	590/1750	1795kg	327	4.1		155	231	28.5	+ Remains quick and characterful - Dated gearbox, no four-wheel drive option in the UK	****
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	178 R	71-74	8/5461	518/5250	516/1700	1795kg	293	4.2	-	155	231	28.5	+ Monster performance, 549bhp an option - Not as desirable as a Bentley or Aston	***
Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG	099 R	'06-'11	8/6208	507/6100	464/2650	1905kg	270	4.5	-	155	345	19.5	+ Beauty, comfort, awesome performance - M5 has the edge on B-roads	***
Mercedes-Benz ML63 AMG	176 R	£86,920	8/5461	518/5250	516/1750	2270kg	232	4.7	-	155	276	23.9	+ Great engine, surprisingly good dynamics - £85K buys a Boxster and an ML350	***
Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG	172 D	£124,000	8/5461	537/5500	560/2000	2475kg	220	5.4	-	130	322	-	+ It exists; epic soundtrack - Ancient chassis, silly price	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-300 SST	118 R	'08-'13	4/1998	290/6500	300/3500	1590kg	185	5.2	13.9	155	256	26.2	+ Evo gets twin-clutch transmission - Not as exciting as it used to be	***
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-360	122 D	'08-'13	4/1998	354/6500	363/3500	1560kg	231	4.1	-	155	328	19.9	+ Ridiculously rapid new Evo - A five-speed gearbox?!	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-330 SST	134 R	'08-'12	4/1998	324/6500	322/3500	1590kg	207	4.4	-	155	256	-	+ Great engine and gearbox combo - It still lives in the shadow of the Evo IX	****
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	181 R	'09-'10	4/1998	403/6500	387/3500	1560kg	262	3.8	-	155	328	-	+ Most powerful factory Evo ever about X grand too much when new	***
Mitsubishi Evo IX FQ-340	088 R	'05-'07	4/1997	345/6800	321/4600	1400kg	250	4.3	10.9	157	-	-	+ Gives Porsche drivers nightmares - Points. Lots of	***
Mitsubishi Evo IX MR FQ-360	181 R	'05-'07	4/1997	366/6887	363/3200	1400kg	266	3.9	-	157	-	-	+ Well-executed engine upgrades - Prison food	***
Mitsubishi Evo VIII	055 R	'03-'04	4/1997	276/6500	289/3500	1410kg	199	5.1	-	157	-	-	+ The Evo grows up - Brakes need beefing up	***
Mitsubishi Evo VIII MR FQ-300	057R	'03-'05	4/1997	305/6800	289/3500	1400kg	221	4.8	-	157	-	20.5	+ Extra pace, extra attitude - Extra money	***
Mitsubishi Evo VII	031R	'02-'03	4/1997	276/6500	282/3500	1360kg	206	5.0	13.0	140	-	20.4	+ Terrific all-rounder - You tell us	***
Mitsubishi Evo VII RS Sprint	041 D	'02-'03	4/1997	320/6500	327/6200	1260kg	258	4.4	-	150	-	-	+ Ruthlessly focused road weapon- For the truly committed	***
Mitsubishi Evo VI Mäkinen Edition	200 R	'00-'01	4/1997	276/6500	275/2750	1365kg	205	4.6	-	150	-	-	+ Our favourite Evo - Subtle it is not	***
Porsche Panamera 4S	186 D	£86,080	6/2997	414/6000	383/1750	1870kg	225	4.8	-	177	208	31.7	+ Strong performance and typically fine Porsche chassis - Misses characterful V8 of old 'S'	***
Porsche Panamera GTS	208 R	£93,391	8/4806	434/6700	383/3500	1925kg	229	4.4	-	178	249	26.4	+ Vivacious V8, entertaining balance - Can feel light on performance next to turbo'd rivals	
Porsche Panamera Turbo	137 R	£108,006	8/4806	493/6000	516/2250	1970kg	254	3.6		188	270	24.6	+ Fast, refined and dynamically sound - It still leaves us cold	***
Porsche Panamera Turbo S	159 D	711-713	8/4806	542/6000	590/2250	1995kg	276	3.7	-	190	270	24.6	+ Pace, excellent ergonomics - Steering feel, ride	***
Porsche Macan S	205 R	£43,648	6/2997	335/5500	339/1450	1865kg	183	5.4	-	157	204	31.4	+ No less compelling than the Turbo - Although lacks its ultimate speed and agility	***
Porsche Macan Turbo	207 D	£59,648	6/3604	394/6000	406/1350	1925kg	208	4.5		165	208	30.7	+ Doesn't feel like an SUV - Still not a match for a proper sports saloon	***
Porsche Cayenne GTS (Mk2)	173 D	£72,523	8/4806	414/6500 513/6000	380/3500	2085kg	202	5.6	-	162	251	26.4	+ Dynamically the best SUV on sale - At two tons, it's still no sports car	***
Porsche Cayenne Turbo (Mk2) Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (Mk2)	202 D 184 D	£93,574	8/4806		533/2250	2185kg	239	4.5	-	173	261	25.2 24.6	+ Remarkable performance, handling, completeness - Bigger, heavier, pricier than Macan	
Range Rover Evoque Coupe Si4	160 D	£118,455 £46,660	8/4806 4/1999	562/6000 237/6000	590/2500 251/1900	2235kg	255 144	4.1 7.0	-	176 135	267 199	24.0	+ More power and torque than a Zonda S 7.3 - In an SUV	****
Range Rover Sport V8 Supercharged	186 D	£84,350	8/5000	503/6000	460/2500	1670kg 2335kg	219	5.0		155	298	21.7	+ Striking looks, sporting dynamics - Hefty price, and petrol version is auto-only + Deceptively quick and capable sports SUV - It's still got a weight problem	***
Range Rover Sport VV Supercharged	209 D	£95,150	8/5000	542/6000	501/3500	2335kg	236	4.5	-	162	298	21.7	+ Strong on-road dynamics combined with genuine off-road ability - Sharper rivals	***
Range Rover SDV8	180 D	£80,850	8/4367	334/3500	516/1750	2360kg	144	6.5	-	140	229	32.5	+ Lighter, more capable, even more luxurious - Diesel V6 model feels more alert	***
Rolls-Royce Ghost	186 D	£216,864	12/6592	563/5250	575/1500	2360kg	242	4.7	-	155	317	20.8	+ It's quicker than you think - It's more enjoyable driven slowly	***
Rolls-Royce Phantom	054 R	£310,200	12/6749	453/5350	531/3500	2560kg	180	5.7	-	149	377	18.0	+ Rolls reinvented for the 21st Century - The roads are barely big enough	***
Subaru WRX STI	201 R	£28,995	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1534kg	196	5.2	-	158	242	27.2	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns (again) - Without a power increase	***
Subaru WRX STI	151 D	70-73	4/2457	296/6000	300/4000	1505kg	200	5.1	-	158	243	26.9	+ Fast Subaru saloon returns - Without the blue paint and gold wheels	****
Subaru Impreza WRX GB270	109 D	'07	4/2457	266/5700	310/3000	1410kg	192	5.2	-	143	-	-	+ Fitting final fling for 'classic' Impreza - End of an era	****
Subaru Impreza STI	090 R	'05-'07	4/2457	276/6000	289/4000	1495kg	188	5.3	-	158	-	25.9	+ Stunning to drive - Not so stunning to look at	****
Subaru Impreza STI Spec C *	084 D	'05-'07	4/1994	320/6730	311/3500	1350kg	240	4.3	-	157	-	-	+ Lighter, faster, fiercer - The need for self-restraint	****
Subaru Impreza RB320	105 R	'07	4/2457	316/6000	332/3750	1495kg	215	4.8	-	155	-	-	+ Fitting tribute to a rallying legend - Too hardcore for some?	***
Subaru Impreza WRX STI PPP	073 R	'03-'05	4/1994	300/6000	299/4000	1470kg	207	5.2	12.9	148	-	-	+ A Subaru with real edge - Bit too edgy in the wet	***
Subaru STi Type RA Spec C *	067R	'03-'05	4/1994	335/7000	280/3750	1380kg	247	4.3		160	-	-	+ Best Impreza since the P1 - Lost its throbby flat-four voice	***
Subaru Impreza Turbo	011 R	'98-'00	4/1994	215/5600	214/4000	1235kg	177	5.4		144	-	27.2	+ Destined for classic status - Thirsty	***
Subaru Impreza P1	200 R	'00-'01	4/1994	276/6500	260/4000	1283kg	219	4.9	13.3	150	-	25.0	+ Ultimate old-shape Impreza - Prices reflect this	***
Subaru Impreza RB5 (PPP)	187 R	'99	4/1994	237/6000	258/3500	1235kg	195	5.0		143	-	-	+ Perfect blend of poise and power - Limited numbers	***
Subaru Impreza 22B	188 R	'98-'99	4/2212	276/6000	265/3200	1270kg	220	5.0		150	-	-	+ The ultimate Impreza - Doesn't come cheap	***
Fesla Model S P85D	208 D	£79,080	515kW	691	687	2239kg	314	3.2	-	155	0	n/a	+ Dual motors and 4WD equals extraordinary acceleration - Lack of charging points	***
Tesla Model S Performance	196 R	'14	310kW	416	442	2100kg	201	4.2	-	130	0	n/a	+ Intoxicating performance, soothing refinement - Generic styling, charging limitations	****
Vauxhall Insignia VXR SuperSport	189 D	£29,824	6/2792	321/5250	321/5250	1825kg	179	5.6	-	170	249	26.6	+ A 170mph Vauxhall - Should be a more engaging steer	***
Vauxhall Vectra VXR	102 D	'06-'09	6/2792	276/5500	262/1800	1580kg	177	6.1	-	161	-	27.4	+ Great engine, effortless pace, good value - Numb steering, lumpy ride	***
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	208 R	£54,499	8/6162	576/6150	545/3850	1834kg	319	4.2	-	155	363	18.5	+ Monster engine; engaging driving experience - Woeful interior	***
Vauxhall VXR8 GTS	160 R	71-713	8/6162	425/6000	406/4600	1831kg	236	4.9	-	155	320	20.9	+ Oversteery and characterful. Available as a pick-up too! - Nearly M3 saloon money	****
	197 D	£49,775	6/2953	345/5250	369/3000	1759kg	199	5.0	-	155		27.7	+ First Volvo to get a full Polestar makeover - Still a close relative of the standard V60	***



Audi TTS & RS

Years 2008-2014 Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1984cc, turbo Power 268bhp @ 6000rpm Torque 258lb ft @ 2500-5000rpm 0-62mph 5.4sec Top speed 155mph (spec is for TTS)



## WHY WOULD YOU?

Because the 2-litre four-cylinder TTS produces a potent 268bhp, and the 2.5-litre five-cylinder TT RS 335bhp. Both offer plenty of turbocharged torque, are mated to quattro four-wheel drive and have those sharp, stylish Mk2 TT looks.

## WHAT TO PAY

An early, high-mileage S can be had for £13k privately. The rarer RS starts at £22k.

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Both the four- and five-cylinder engine are robust, though regular servicing is essential for longevity – specialists recommend an oil change annually or every 10k miles. S-tronic 'boxes are usually trouble free, but it's crucial the oil and filter are changed by 40k miles. The Haldex transmission is also reliable, but must have its oil and filter changed every 20k or two years. (Full guide, evo 205.)

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★ Thrill-free zone ★★ Tepid ★★★ Interesting ★★★★ Seriously good ★★★★★ A truly great car



## **Our Choice**

Audi R8 Spyder. The Spyder boasts supercar looks, presence and performance, yet you really could drive one every day. The V8 has a sweet engine and great dynamics, but if money's no object, we'd be seriously tempted by the equally brilliant V10.



**Best of the Rest**The Mk3 Porsche Boxster S is a fabulous all-rounder, while the Lotus Exige S Roadster counters with a more focused driving experience. Jaguar's F-type also impresses in both V6 (left) and V8 forms. Mazda's MX-5 is best for budget rear-drive fun, but for the ultimate thrills, get a Caterham 620R or Ariel Atom.

## Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	ndm09-0	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Alfa Romeo 8C Spider	161 R	'09-'11	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1675kg	273	4.5	-	181	-	-	+ Beauty meets beast. They hit it off - Boot is useless for touring	****
Ariel Atom 3.5 Supercharged	180 D	£38,000	4/1998	310/8400	169/7200	550kg	573	2.7	-	155	-	-	+ As mad as ever - Rain	****
Ariel Atom 3.5R	198 R	£64,800	4/1998	350/8400	243/6100	550kg	647	2.6	-	155	-	-	+ Remarkable balance, poise and pace - Pricey	****
Ariel Atom 3 245	113 D	'08-'12	4/1998	245/8200	155/5200	500kg	498	3.2	-	150	-	33.0	+ The Atom just got a little bit better - Can still be a bit draughty	****
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	138 R	'09-'12	4/1998	300/8200	162/7200	550kg	554	3.3	-	155	-	-	+ It's brilliant - It's mental	****
Ariel Atom Mugen	165 R	'12-'13	4/1998	270/8300	188/6000	550kg	499	2.9	-	150	-	-	+ Perfect engine for the Atom's chassis - Only ten were made	****
Ariel Atom V8 500	165 R	'10-'12	8/3000	475/10,500	284/7750	550kg	877	3.0	5.8	170	-	-	+ An experience unlike anything else on Planet Car - £150K for an Atom	****
Ariel Nomad	210 R	£33,000	4/2354	235/7200	221/4300	670kg	365	3.4	-	134	-	-	+ Off-road capabilities make for a super plaything - No Bluetooth	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	130 R	£89,994	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1710kg	250	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ Sportiest, coolest drop-top Aston in years - Starting to feel its age	****
Aston Martin V8 Vantage S Roadster	161 R	£108,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1690kg	258	4.6	-	189	299	21.9	+ Sounds amazing, looks even better - Still not the best drop-top in its class	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster	202 D	£147,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1745kg	329	4.1	-	201	343	19.2	+ A brilliant two-seat roadsterlet down by a frustrating gearbox	****
Aston Martin V12 Vantage Roadster	175 R	'12-'14	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1760kg	294	4.4	-	190	-	-	+ As good as the coupe, with amplified V12 rumble - Just a smidgen shakier	****
Aston Martin DB9 Volante	150 D	£141,995	12/5935	470/6000	443/5000	1815kg	263	4.6	-	190	368	18.2	+ Consummate cruiser and capable when pushed - Roof-up wind noise	****
Aston Martin DBS Volante	133 D	'09-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1810kg	286	4.3	-	191	388	17.3	+ A feelgood car par excellence - It's a bit of a heavyweight	****
Audi TTS Roadster	207 D	£41,085	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1450kg	214	5.2	-	155	169	38.7	+ A serious proposition, ranking close behind a Boxster S - Coupe still looks better	****
Audi TTS Roadster	122 D	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1455kg	187	5.6	-	155	189	34.9	+ Effortlessly quick - Long-term appeal open to question	****
Audi TT RS Roadster	133 D	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1510kg	225	4.7	-	155	212	31.0	+ Terrific engineis the best thing about it	****
Audi S5 Cabriolet	130 D	£46,770	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1875kg	178	5.6	-	155	199	33.2	+ Gets the S4's trick supercharged engine - Bordering on dull	****
Audi RS5 Cabriolet	179 D	£69,505	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1920kg	235	4.9	-	155	249	26.4	+ Pace, looks, interior, naturally aspirated V8 - Not the last word in fun or involvement	****
Audi RS4 Cabriolet	094 D	'06-'08	8/4163	414/7800	317/5500	1845kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ That engine - Wibble wobble, wibble wobble, jelly on a plate	***
Audi R8 V8 Spyder	186 D	£102,385	8/4163	424/7900	317/6000	1660kg	259	4.8	-	187	337	19.6	+ More delicate and subtle than the V10 - The V10 sounds even better	****
Audi R8 V10 Spyder	185 R	£123,485	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1720kg	306	4.1	-	194	349	19.0	+ Sensational for the money - Not quite a rival for the 458 and 12C Spiders	****
BAC Mono	189 R	£124,255	4/2261	280/7700	206/6000	540kg	527	2.8	-	170	-	-	+ The most single-minded track car available - That means no passengers	****
Bentley Continental GT V8 Convertible	168 R	£150,200	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2395kg	212	4.7	-	187	254	25.9	+ One of the world's best topless GTs - Still no sports car	****
Bentley Continental GT V8 S Convertible	194 D	£160,500	8/3993	521/6000	502/1700	2395kg	221	4.5	-	191	258	25.4	+ A true drivers' Bentley - Excessively heavy; feels like it could give more	****
Bentley Conti GT Speed Convertible	187 D	£181,000	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2420kg	263	4.1	-	203	347	19.0	+ Effortless performance, style - Running costs a tad on the high side	****
Bentley Continental Supersports	147D	'10-'12	12/5998	621/6000	590/2000	2395kg	263	3.9	-	202	388	17.3	+ Fast, capable and refined - Coupe does the Supersports thing better	****
BMW M235i Convertible	207 D	£37,710	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1600kg	204	5.2	-	155	199	33.2	+ Neat styling; great drivetrain - Loss of dynamic ability compared with coupe	****
BMW Z4 sDrive 35i M Sport (Mk2)	186 D	£43,005	6/2979	302/5800	295/1300	1505kg	204	5.2	-	155	219	30.1	+ Looks, hard-top versatility, drivetrain - Clumsy chassis is upset by ragged surfaces	***
BMW Z4 3.0si (Mk1)	094 D	'06-'09	6/2996	265/6600	232/2750	1310kg	205	5.7	-	155	-	32.9	+ Terrific straight-six - Handling not as playful as we'd like	****
BMW Z4 M Roadster	091 R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1410kg	244	4.8	-	155	-	23.3	+ Exhilarating and characterful, that engine - Stiff suspension	****
BMW M Roadster	002 R	'98-'02	6/3246	325/7400	258/4900	1375kg	240	5.3	-	155	-	25.4	+ Fresh-air M3, that motor, hunky looks - M Coupe drives better	***
BMW 435i Convertible	194 D	£45,680	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1740kg	176	5.6	-	155	190	34.8	+ Impressive chassis, smart looks, neat roof - Extra weight, not as composed as coupe	***
BMW M4 Convertible (F83)	202 D	£61,145	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1750kg	247	4.6	-	155	213	31.0	+ As good as fast four-seat drop-tops getbut still not as good as a coupe or saloon	****
BMW M3 Convertible (E93)	119 D	'08-13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1810kg	232	5.3	-	155	297	22.2	+ M DCT transmission, pace, slick roof - Extra weight blunts the edge	****
BMW M3 Convertible (E46)	035 D	'01-'06	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1655kg	207	5.3	-	155	-	23.3	+ That engine - Gets the wobbles on British B-roads	****
BMW Z8	026 R	'00-'03	8/4941	400/6600	369/3800	1585kg	256	4.8	11.1	155	-	14.4	+ M5-powered super-sportster - M5's more fun to drive	***
Caterham Seven 160	198 R	£19,330	4/660	80/7000	79/3400	490kg	166	6.5	-	100	-	-	+ The fabulous Seven formula at its most basic - Gets pricey with options	****
Caterham Seven 270	209 R	£22,995	4/1595	135/6800	122/4100	540kg	254	5.0	-	122	-	-	+ Feisty engine, sweetly balanced, manic and exciting - The temptation of more power	****
Caterham Seven 360	209 R	£26,995	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	560kg	327	4.8	-	130	-	-	+ Extra power is welcome - You'll need the six-speed gearbox to make the most of it	****
Caterham Seven 420	209 R	£29,995	4/1999	210/7600	150/6300	560kg	381	3.8	-	136	-	-	+ It's the one we've chosen to build - Trickier on the limit than lesser-powered Sevens	****
Caterham Seven 620R	187 R	£49,995	4/1999	311/7700	219/7350	545kg	580	2.8	-	155	-	-	+ Banzai on track, yet still relevant on the road - £50k for a Seven?	****
Caterham Seven CSR	094 R	£46,495	4/2261	256/7500	200/6200	565kg	460	3.8	-	155	-	-	+ Brilliant for high days, holidays and trackdays - Wet Wednesdays	****
Caterham Seven Roadsport 125	105 R	'07-'14	4/1595	125/6100	120/5350	539kg	235	5.9	-	112	-	-	+ Great debut for new Ford-engined model - Bigger drivers need SV model	****
Caterham Seven Supersport	165 R	711-714	4/1595	140/6900	120/5790	520kg	273	4.9	-	120	-	-	+ One of the best Caterhams is also one of the cheapest of its era - It's quite minimalist	****
Caterham Seven Supersport R	180 D	73-74	4/1999	180/7300	143/6100	535kg	342	4.8	-	130	-	-	+ One of the best road-and-track Sevens - Impractical, noisy, uncomfortable	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R300	150 R	'09-'12	4/1999	175/7000	139/6000	515kg	345	4.5	-	140	-	-	+ Possibly all the Caterham you need - They're not cheap	****
Caterham Seven Superlight R500	123 R	'08-'14	4/1999	263/8500	177/7200	506kg	528	2.9	-	150	-	-	+ Better power-to-weight ratio than a Veyron - Until you add the driver	****
Caterham Levante	131 R	'09-'10	8/2398	550/10000	300/8500	520kg	1074	4.8	8.2	150	-	-	+ Twice the power-to-weight ratio of a Veyron! - Not easy to drive slowly	****
Caterham Seven R300	068 R	'02-'06	4/1796	160/7000	130/5000	500kg	325	4.7	-	130	-	-	+ Our 2002 Trackday Car of the Year - Not for wimps	****
Caterham Seven R500	200 R	'99-'06	4/1796	230/8600	155/7200	460kg	510	3.6	8.8	146	-	-	+ The K-series Seven at its very best - No cup holders	****
Donkervoort D8 GTO Performance	185 R	£120,000	5/2480	375/5500	350/1750	695kg	548	2.8	-	168	-	-	+ There's nothing else like it - Pricey for a car with a five-cylinder engine	****
Ferrari California T	198 D	£154,490	8/3855	552/7500	557/4750	1729kg	324	3.6	-	196	250	26.9	+ Turbocharged engine is a triumph - Still places daily useability above outright thrills	****
Ferrari California	171 D	'08-'14	8/4297	483/7750	372/5000	1735kg	283	3.8	-	193	299	-	+ Revised with sharper performance and dynamics - We'd still take a 458 Spider	****
Honda S2000	118 D	'99-'09	4/1997	237/8300	153/7500	1260kg	191	6.2	-	150	-	28.2	+ An alternative and rev-happy roadster - The Boxster's better	****
Jaguar F-type Convertible	186 R	£56,745	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1587kg	214	5.5	-	161	234	28.8	+ Beautiful, enjoyable, responsive - Noticeably junior to the V6 S	****
Jaguar F-type S Convertible	183 R	£65,745	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1604kg	238	5.3	-	171	234	28.8	+ Better-damped and more rounded than the V8 S - A Boxster S is £20k cheaper	****
Jaguar F-type R Convertible	1005	£92,295	6/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1665kg	331	4.0	-	186	255	26.4	+ Pace, characterful V8 - Costs £25k more than the S	****
Jaguar F-type V8 S Convertible	183 R	73-74	8/5000	488/6500	461/2500	1665kg	298	4.3	-	186	259	25.5	+ Wilder than the V6 S - Could be too exuberant for some	****
Jaguar XKR Convertible	130 R	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1725kg	296	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fantastic 5-litre V8 - Loses sporting ground to its main foes	****
Jaguar XKR-S Convertible	167 R	'11-'14	8/5000	542/6500	502/2500	1725kg	319	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Loud and mad; most exciting Jag in years - It was also the most expensive in years	****
Jaguar XKR		'06-'09	8/4196	414/6250	413/4000	1705kg	247	5.0	-	155	-	-	+ First Jag sports car for years - Overwrought detailing	****
Jaguar XKR	004 R	'97-'06	8/3996	370/6150	387/3600	1750kg	215	5.4	12.8	155	-	15.6	+ Hurricane-in-the-hair motoring - A danger to toupees everywhere	****
KTM X-Bow GT	183 D	£95,880	4/1984	281/6400	310/3200	875kg	326	4.1	-	144	189	34.0	+ Extraordinary ability, now in a more road-friendly package - Price	****
KTM X-Bow R	165 R	£87,480	4/1984	296/5500	295/3300	818kg	368	3.6	-	144	-	-	+ Sharper handling, more power - Pity it's not even lighter, and cheaper	****
KTM X-Bow	138 R	'08-'12	4/1984	237/5500	229/2000	818kg	294	3.8	-	137	-	-	+ Mad looks; real quality feel - Heavier and pricier than you'd hope	****
Lotus Elise 1.6	144 D	£30,900	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	876kg	155	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ New 1.6 Elise is light and fantastic - Smaller engine could put some off	****

## **Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)** Issue 012, October 1999

John Barker took a firstgeneration 911 GT3 through France to get the best view of a solar eclipse

'The sound starts as an angry, guttural rumble. Then the 360bhp flat-six really goes for it. At 6000rpm, the noise jumps a couple of octaves, a howl to prickle all your prickly bits fills the cabin, and the GT3 surges forward even harder.

'Feedback through the wheel is deliciously detailed and the throttle response so sharp and accurate you can edge up to the limit of all four tyres with confidence.

'You absorb the feedback through the steering wheel and seat in every corner and imagine you're letting the side down if the devastating brakes don't feel like they're really biting before you turn in. Ambling along in the GT3 is tolerated, but it feels like they're wasted miles.



## WORRIED ABOUT EXPENSIVE CAR REPAIR BILLS?

If your car goes wrong, you could be faced with wallet busting repair bills. Not to mention the hassle of dealing with the garage and being without your motor for days, or even weeks on end.

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Warrantywise work in partnership with global feedback engine Feefo and were awarded their Gold Trusted Merchant award for 2015.





## QUENTIN VIDEO GUIDE

Watch as motoring expert, Quentin Willson, explains the benefits of a used car warranty

Watch Quentin's Guide warrantywise.co.uk/guide





## THEO IS WARRANTY WISE

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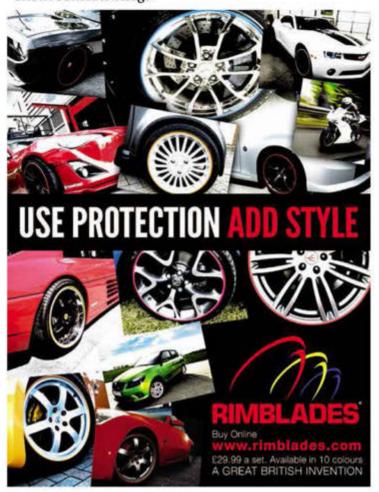
## Sports Cars / Convertibles

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft./rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	<b>eVO</b> rating	
Lotus Elise 1.6 Club Racer	183 R	£30,900	4/1598	134/6800	118/4400	852kg	160	6.0	-	127	149	45.0	+ Even lighter, even more focused - A touch pricey for a stripped-out Elise	****
Lotus Elise S	172 R	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	924kg	239	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ New supercharged Elise boasts epic grip and pace -£37K before (pricey) options	****
Lotus Elise S Club Racer	189 D	£37,200	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	905kg	244	4.2	-	145	175	37.5	+ Purist approach intensifies ability - Lightest, option-free spec requires commitment	****
Lotus Elise S Cup	207 D	£43,500	4/1798	217/6800	184/4600	932kg	237	4.2	-	140	175	37.5	+ Rewards precision like no other Elise - You can't remove the roof	****
Lotus Exige S Roadster	186 R	£55,500	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1166kg	301	3.8	-	145	235	28.0	+ Like the hard-top Exige S, but more road-friendly - Boxster S is a better all-rounder	****
Lotus Elise R	068 R	'04-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	860kg	223	5.6	13.9	150	196	34.4	+ Most thrillsome Elise yet - Blaring engine note	****
Lotus Elise SC	131 R	'08-'11	4/1794	218/8000	156/5000	870kg	254	4.5	11.4	148	199	33.2	+ All the usual Elise magic - Supercharged engine lacks sparkle	****
Lotus Elise S 1.8	104 R	'06-'10 '02-'04	4/1794	134/6200 156/7000	127/4200	860kg	158	6.3	18.7	127		37.2 40.9	+ Brilliant entry-level Elise - Precious little	****
Lotus Elise 111S Lotus Elise Sport 135	049 R 040 D	'03	4/1796 4/1796	135/6200	129/4650 129/4850	860kg 726kg	197 189	5.1 5.4	-	131 129	-	40.9	+ A genuinely useable Elise - Air-con? In an Elise? + One of our fave S2 Elises - Brakes need more bite and pedal feel	****
Lotus Elise Sport 190	040 D	'03	4/1796	190/7800	128/5000	710kg	272	4.7	12.1	135	-		+ Fabulous trackday tool - Pricey	****
Lotus Elise (S1)	126 R	'96-'01	4/1796	118/5500	122/3000	731kg	164	6.1	18.5	126	-	39.4	+ A modern classic - A tad impractical?	****
Lotus 2-Eleven Supercharged	123 R	'07-'11	4/1796	252/8000	179/7000	670kg	382	3.8	-	150	-	-	+ Impressive on road and track - Not hardcore enough for some	****
Lotus 2-Eleven GT4	138 R	'09-'11	4/1796	266/8200	179/7200	670kg	403	3.7	-	155	-	-	+ evo Track Car of the Year 2009 - It's a 76-grand Lotus with no roof	****
Lotus 2-Eleven	126 R	'07-'11	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	720kg	267	4.3	-	140	-	-	+ Not far off supercharged car's pace - Pricey once it's made road-legal	****
Lotus 340R	126 R	'00	4/1796	190/7800	146/5000	658kg	293	4.5	12.5	126	-	-	+ Hardcore road-racerthat looks like a dune buggy from Mars	****
Lotus Elan SE	095 R	'89-'95	4/1588	165/6600	148/4200	1022kg	164	6.7	-	137	-	21.0	+ Awesome front-drive chassis - Rather uninvolving	****
Maserati GranCabrio	142 D	£98,940	8/4691	434/7000	332/4750	1980kg	223	5.2	-	177	337	19.5	+ As good to drive as it is to look at - Lacks the grunt of some rivals	****
Maserati GranCabrio Sport	161 D	£104,535	8/4691	444/7000	376/4750	1980kg	228	5.0	-	177	377	19.5	+ Looks, performance, cruising ability - Brakes could be sharper	****
Maserati GranCabrio MC	185 D	£112,370	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1973kg	234	4.9	-	179	337	19.5	+ Most powerful GranCabrio yet - The GranCabrio is starting to show its age	****
Mazda MX-51.8i SE (Mk3.5)		£18,495	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1075kg	117	9.9	-	121	167	39.8	+ Basic MX-5 offers plenty of fun - But you'll probably want the 2.0's power	****
Mazda MX-5 R'ster Coupe 2.0i (Mk3.5)	170 R	£23,095	4/1999	158/7000	139/5000	1173kg	137	7.9	-	136	181	36.2	+ Handles brilliantly again - Less than macho image; no soft-top option with 2-litre engine	
Mazda MX-51.8i (Mk3)	091 R	'05-'09	4/1798	124/6500	123/4500	1155kg	108	9.3	-	122	-	-	+ Gearchange, interior - Lost some of the charm of old MX-5s; dubious handling	****
Mazda MX-5 1.8i (Mk2)	017 R	'98-'05	4/1839	146/7000	124/5000	1065kg	140	8.6	-	123	-	32.5	+ Affordable ragtops don't get much better- Cheap cabin	****
Mazda MX-51.6 (Mk1)	131 R	'89-'97	4/1597	115/6500	100/5500	971kg	120	9.0	-	114	-	-	+ The original and still (pretty much) the best - Less than rigid	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK350 Sport	161 R	£44,605	6/3498	302/6500	273/3500	1465kg	209	5.5	-	155	167	39.8	+ Best non-AMG SLK yet - Still no Boxster-beater	***
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	186 R	£55,345	8/5461	416/6800	398/4500	1615kg	262	4.6	-	155	195	33.6	+ Quicker and more economical than ever - Needs to be sharper, too	***
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG	087R	'05-'10	8/5439	355/5750	376/4000	1575kg	229	4.9	-	155	-	23.5	+ Superb engine, responsive chassis - No manual option, ESP spoils fun	****
Mercedes-Benz SLK55 AMG Black Series	110 R	'07-'08	8/5439	394/5750	383/3750	1495kg	268	4.9	11.2	174	-	-	+ AMG gets serious - Dull-witted 7G-Tronic auto box, uneven dynamics	***
Mercedes-Benz SL500	169 D	£81,915	8/4663	429/5250	516/1800	1710kg	255	4.6	-	155	212	31.0	+ Wafty performance, beautifully engineered - Lacks ultimate sports car feel	****
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	171 D	£112,510	8/5461	530/5500 621/4800	590/2000	1770kg	304	4.3	-	155	231	2//	+ Monster performance, lighter than before - Still heavy, steering lacks consistency	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	183 D 117 D	£170,815 '08-'13	12/5980 8/6208	518/6800	737/2300 464/5200	1875kg 1970kg	336 278	4.0	-	155 155	270 328	24.4	+ Chassis just about deals with the power - Speed limits + More focused than old SL55 AMG - Lost some of its all-round appeal	****
Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG	070 R	'02-'07	8/5439	493/6100	516/2650	1970kg 1955kg	256	4.6	10.2	155	320	20.0	+ As fast as a Murciélago - Not as much fun	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG	071 D	'04-'10	12/5980	604/4800	737/2000	2035kg	302	4.1	- 10.2	155			+ Gob-smacking performance - Gob-smackingly pricey	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Roadster	167 R	12-14	8/6208	563/6800	479/4750	1660kg	345	3.7	-	197	308	21.4	+ Loses none of the coupe's talents - But (understandably) loses the gullwing doors	****
Mini JCW Convertible (R57)	130 R	£25,295	4/1598	208/6000	206/1850	1230kg	172	6.9	-	146	169	38.7	+ A manlier Mini cabrio. As hardcore as the hatchwhich is still better	****
Morgan 3 Wheeler	198 R	£25,950	2/1976	82/5250	103/3250	525kg	159	6.0	-	115	215	30.3	+ Quirky, characterful, brilliant - Can become a two-wheeler if you push too hard	****
Morgan Plus 8 Speedster	202 R	£71.140	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1000kg	368	4.2	-	148	282	23.3	+ Fantastic old-school roadster experience - Getsunsettled by bigbumps	***
Morgan Plus 8	171 R	£86,345	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1100kg	334	4.4	-	155	256	25.7	+ Hilarious mix of old looks and new mechanicals - Refinement is definitely old-school	****
Morgan Aero SuperSports	145 R	£128.045	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.2	-	170	-	-	+ As above, with a V8 and targa top - It's proper supercar money	****
Morgan Aero 8	105 R	'02-'08	8/4799	362/6300	361/3400	1100kg	334	4.5	-	170	-	25.2	+ Glorious sound, view over bonnet, dynamics - Awkward-looking rear	****
Nissan 370Z Roadster	143 R	'10-'14	6/3696	326/7000	269/5200	1554kg	213	5.5	-	155	262	25.2	+ The Zed's old-school character remains intact - Its purposeful looks don't	****
Porsche Boxster (981)	172 R	£38,810	6/2706	261/6700	206/4500	1310kg	202	5.4	-	164	192	34.5	+ Goes & looks better; cleanest Boxster ever - Steering now electric to help cut CO2	****
Porsche Boxster S (981)	186 R	£47,035	6/3436	311/6700	265/4500	1320kg	239	5.1	-	173	206	32.1	+ Boxster steps out of 911's shadow - But gets 911's less appealing electric steering	****
Porsche Boxster GTS (981)	203 D	£52,879	6/3436	325/6700	273/4500	1345kg	246	5.0	-	174	211	31.4	+ Superb dynamics, fantastic engine, great loooks - Sport suspension is very firm	****
Porsche Boxster (987)		'05-'12	6/2893	252/6400	214/4400	1335kg	192	5.9	-	163	221	30.0	+ Second-gen Boxster's as brilliant as ever - It's a typically Porsche redesign	****
Porsche Boxster S (987)	161 R	'05-'12	6/3436	306/6400	265/5500	1355kg	229	5.3	-	170	223	29.7	+ As above, but with more power - Lighter steering than before	****
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	188 R	'10-'12	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1275kg	252	5.0	-	166	221	29.1	+ Lighter, more driver-centric Boxster - Collapsed-brolly roof not the most practical	****
Porsche Boxster (986 2.7)	049 R	'99-'04	6/2687	228/6300	192/4700	1275kg	182	6.3	-	155	-	29.1	+ Still an impeccable sports car - Very little	****
Porsche Boxster S (986)	070 R	'99-'04	6/3179	260/6200	228/4700	1320kg	200	5.5	-	164	-	26.9	+ Added power is seductive - As above	****
Porsche 911 Carrera Cabriolet (991)	183 R	£82,169	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1470kg	238	5.0	-	177	216	30.7	+ Brilliant engine - Doesn't quite have the 'magic at any speed' character of previous 911s	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S Cabriolet (991)	171 R	£92,204	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1485kg	270	4.7	-	187	228	29.1	+ All-new open 911 drives just like the coupe - Which means the same artificial steering	****
Porsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet (997)	139 D	'07-'12	6/3800	493/6000	479/1950	1645kg	305	3.8	-	194	275	24.1	+ Absurdly quick and capable drop-top - We'd still take the coupe	****
Porsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet (996)	060 R	'03-'05	6/3596	414/6000	413/4600	1700kg	250	4.7	-	185	-	-	+ Faster than you'll ever need it to be - Just the image thing again	****
Radical SR3 SL	174 R	£81,300	4/2000	300/6000	265/4000	795kg	383	3.0	-	161	-	-	+ Our 2011 Track Car of the Year, and it's road-legal - You'll need to wrap up warm	****
Radical RXC Turbo 500	209 D	£143,400	6/3496	530/6100	481/5000	1100kg	490	2.6	-	185	-	-	+ Huge performance, intuitive adjustability, track ability - Compromised for road use	****
Renault Sport Spider	183 R	'96-'99	4/1998	148/6000	136/4500	930kg	157	6.5	-	131	-	- 20.0	+ Rarity, fabulous unassisted steering feel - Heavier than you'd hope	****
Toyota MR2	187 R	'00-'06	4/1794	138/6400	125/4400	975kg	141	7.2	21.2	130	-	38.2	+ Tight lines, taut dynamics - Minimal luggage space	****
TVR Tamora	070 R	'01-'07 '05-'07	6/3605	350/7200	290/5500	1050kg	338	4.5	- 0.1	160 195+	-	-	+ Well-sorted soft-top TVR - Awkward styling	****
TVR Tuscan Convertible	091 R		6/3996	365/6800	315/6000	1100kg	337	3.8	8.1		-	26 /	+ Spirit of the Griffreborn - Over 195mph? Really?	****
TVR Chimaera 5.0 TVR Griffith 4.3	007R 068R	'93-'03 '92-'93	8/4988 8/4280	320/5500 280/5500	320/3750 305/4000	1060kg 1060kg	307 268	4.6 <b>4.8</b>	11.2	167 148	-	26.4	+ Gorgeous noise, tarmac-rippling grunt - Details + The car that made TVR. Cult status - Mere details	****
TVR Griffith 500	009 R	92-93	8/4280	320/5500	320/3750	1060kg	307	4.8	11.2	167	-	221	+ The Car that made TVK. Cult status - were details + Gruff diamond - A few rough edges	****
I VI GIIIILII JOO		'00-'04	4/2198	145/5800	150/4000	875kg	168	5.6	- 11.2	136		34.4	+ Absurdly good Vauxhall- The badge?	****
Vauyhall VY220				143/3000	130/4000	UIJNE	100	J.U	-	IJU	-			
Vauxhall VX220 Vauxhall VX220 Turbo	023 R 066 R	'03-'05	4/1998	197/5500	184/1950	930kg	215	4.7		151	_		+ Nothing comes close for the money - Marginal everyday usability	****



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## **Our Choice**

Porsche 911 GT3. You might think the GT3's win at evo Car of the Year 2013 was a foregone conclusion, but neither of the last two GT3s (the 997.2 and 997.1) claimed an eCoty title. Yet the 991 managed it, and in a vintage year too (Ferrari F12, Merc SLS Black). Yes, it really is that good.



**Best of the Rest**Mercedes' AMG GT S is deeply satisfying on every level – we prefer it to the Porsche 911 Turbo and Nissan GT-R. Aston's V8 Vantage N430 and V12 Vantage S are incredibly well-sorted drivers' cars, the Cayman GT4 is as good as the hype suggests, while Jaguar's F-type R Coupe is the best F-type yet.

## Coupes / GTs

Car		Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2g/km	EC mpg	<b>eVO</b> rating	
Alfa Ro	meo 4C	209 R	£45,000	4/1742	237/6000	258/2200	895kg	269	4.5		160	157	41.5	+ Carbonfibre tub, mini-supercar looks - Hot hatch engine, clunky gearbox	****
	meo 8C Competizione	120 R	'07-'09	8/4691	450/7000	354/4750	1585kg	288	4.1	-	181	-	-	+ Looks, exclusivity, noise, balance - They're all sold	****
	D4 Biturbo	206 R	£50,950	6/2993	345/4000	516/1500	1585kg	221	4.6	-	173	139	53.3	+ Fifth-gear oversteer - Sounds like a diesel; fuel economy not as good as you might hop	****
Alpina E	B4 Biturbo	206 R	£58,950	6/2979	404/5500	442/3000	1615kg	254	4.2	-	188	177	37.2	+ More fluid than the M4; better traction, too - Not as precise as the M-car over the limit	****
Alpina I	B3 Biturbo (E92)	108 R	'07-'13	6/2979	355/5500	369/3800	1570kg	230	4.8	-	177	-	29.1	+ Alpina's M3 alternative - Too refined for some	****
Alpina I	B3 GT3 (E92)	176 D	'12-'13	6/2979	402/6000	398/4500	1535kg	266	4.4	-	186	224	-	+ Alpina's M3 GTS alternative - Auto gearbox frustrates when pressing on	****
Aston N	Martin V8 Vantage	169 D	£84,995	8/4735	420/7000	346/5750	1630kg	262	4.7	-	180	328	20.4	+ 2012 upgrades keep the V8 Vantage on song - Starting to feel a little dated, though	****
Aston N	Martin V8 Vantage N430	210 R	£89,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	321	20.5	+ Malleable, involving, can still hold its own - Never feels rampantly quick	****
Aston N	Martin V8 Vantage S	168 R	£94,995	8/4735	430/7300	361/5000	1610kg	271	4.5	-	189	299	21.9	+ Keener engine, V12 Vantage looks - Slightly sluggish auto only	****
Aston N	Martin V12 Vantage S	190 R	£138,000	12/5935	565/6750	457/5750	1665kg	345	3.7	-	205	343	19.2	+ The best car Aston Martin currently makes - Old-school automated 'box	****
	Martin V12 Vantage	146 R	'09-'13	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.4	9.7	190	388	17.3	+ The car we hoped the V8 Vantage would be - Erm, a tad thirsty?	****
	Martin V12 Zagato	181 F	73	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1680kg	308	4.2	-	190	388	17.3	+ The looks, the noise, the way it drives - It's several times the price of a V12 Vantage	****
	Martin DB9	178 R	£133,495	12/5935	510/6500	457/5500	1785kg	290	4.6	-	183	368	18.2	+ Better than the old DB9 in every respect - Automatic gearbox could be quicker	****
	Martin DBS	142 R	'07-'12	12/5935	510/6500	420/5750	1695kg	306	4.2	-	191	388	17.3	+ Stupendous engine, gearbox, brakes - Pricey. Can bite the unwary	****
	72.0 TFSI (Mk3)	204 R	£29,915	4/1984	227/4500	273/1650	1230kg	188	6.0	-	155	137	47.9	+ Desirable, grippy and effortlessly quick - Still not the last word in interaction	****
Audi TT	2.0 TFSI quattro (Mk3)	203 D	£32,860	4/1984	227/4500	273/1600	1335kg	173	5.3	-	155	149	44.1	+ Looks, interior, decent performance and handling - Lacks ultimate involvement	****
	S (Mk3)	209 R	£38,790	4/1984	306/5800	280/1800	1365kg	228	4.9	-	155	-	-	+ The most dynamically interesting TT yet - Still not as interactive as a Cayman	****
Audi T1	T 2.0 TFSI (Mk2)	155 R	'06-'14	4/1984	208/4300	258/1600	1295kg	163	6.3	15.7	152	154	42.8	+ Front-driver loses nothing to quattro TTs - Steers like a computer game	****
Audi TT	TS (Mk2)	193 R	'08-'14	4/1984	268/6000	258/2500	1395kg	195	5.4	-	155	184	35.8	+ Usefully quicker TT; great drivetrain - Still steers like a computer game	****
Audi TT	TRS (Mk2)	158 R	'09-'14	5/2480	335/5400	332/1600	1450kg	235	4.4	11.1	155	209	31.4	+ Sublime 5-cylinder turbo engine - Rest of package can't quite match it	****
Audi TT	TRS Plus (Mk2)	185 D	72-74	5/2480	355/5500	343/1650	1450kg	249	4.3	-	174	209	31.4	+ Stonkingly fast cross-country - Shockingly expensive for a TT	****
Audi TT	TSport (Mk1)	081 D	'05-'06	4/1781	237/5700	236/2300	1390kg	173	5.9	-	155	-	30.3	+ Deliciously purposeful interior, crisp chassis - Numb steering	****
Audi S5	5	189 D	£43,665	6/2995	328/5500	325/2900	1675kg	199	4.9	-	155	190	34.9	+ Supercharged V6 makes S5 cleaner and faster - Poor body control	***
Audi RS		206 R	£59,870	8/4163	444/8250	317/4000	1715kg	263	4.5	-	155	246	26.9	+ Brilliant engine and improved chassis - Lack of suspension travel; inconsistent steering	****
Audi R8		201 R	£93,785	8/4163	424/7900	317/4500	1560kg	276	4.1	9.9	188	332	19.9	+ A true 911 alternative - Exclusivity comes at a price	****
Audi R8	3 V10	181 D	£114,885	10/5204	518/8000	391/6500	1620kg	325	3.9	8.4	194	346	19.0	+ Real supercar feel - The V8 is £20k less, and still superb	****
Audi R8	3 V10 Plus	190 R	£126,885	10/5204	542/8000	398/6500	1570kg	351	3.8	-	198	346	19.0	+ An R8 fit to take on the 458 and 12C - Firm ride may be too much for some	****
Audi R8	BLMX	208 R	£160,000	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1595kg	358	3.4	-	198	299	21.9	+ More of everything that makes the R8 great - S-tronic transmission not perfect	****
Audi R8		169 F	'10-'12	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1520kg	369	3.6	-	199	-	-	+ Everything we love about the R8 - Not as hardcore as we wanted	****
Bentley	Continental GT V8	178 R	£140,300	8/3993	500/6000	487/1700	2220kg	229	4.6	-	188	246	27.0	+ A proper drivers' Bentley with decent economy - W12 suddenly seems pointless	****
	Continental GT V8 S	204 F	£149,800	8/3933	521/6000	502/1700	2220kg	238	4.3	-	192	250	26.4	+ An even better drivers' Bentley - Vast weight makes its presence felt in harder driving	****
	/ Continental GT	152 D	£150,500	12/5998	567/6000	516/1700	2245kg	257	4.3	-	197	338	19.5	+ 200mph in utter comfort - Weight, thirst	****
	/ Continental GT Speed	205 D	£154,400	12/5998	626/6000	605/1700	2245kg	283	4.0	-	206	338	19.5	+ Desirability meets exclusivity and performance - Ageing styling	****
Bentley	Continental GT3-R	203 D	£237,500	8/3993	572/6000	518/1700	2120kg	274	3.6	-	170	295	22.2	+ The best-handling Continental ever - Expensive; it still weighs 2120kg	****
BMW 1-	-series M Coupe	188 R	'11-'12	6/2979	335/5900	369/1500	1495kg	228	4.8	-	155	224	-	+ Character, turbo pace and great looks - Came and went too quick	****
BMW N	1235i Coupe	209 R	£34,535	6/2979	321/5800	332/1300	1455kg	224	5.0	-	155	189	34.9	+ Powertrain, chassis, looks, size - Limited-slip diff is an option, not standard	****
	35i M Sport Coupe	189 D	£42,365	6/2979	302/5800	295/1200	1510kg	203	5.4	-	155	169	35.8	+ Better balance than 3-series saloon - Can feel characterless at lower speeds	****
BMW N		206 R	£57,050	6/2979	425/5500	406/1850	1497kg	288	4.3	-	155	204	32.1	+ Ferociously fast - Only really sparkles when you're on or over the limit	****
BMW N		196 R	'07-13	8/3999	414/8300	295/3900	1580kg	266	4.3	10.3	155	290	22.8	+ Fends off all of its rivalsexcept the cheaper 1-series M	****
	13 GTS (E92)	171 R	70-71	8/4361	444/8300	324/3750	1530kg	295	4.3	-	193	295	-	+ Highly exclusive, one of the most focused M-cars ever - Good luck trying to find one	****
	13 (E46)	066 R	'00-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	12.3	155	-	23.7	+ One of the best BMWs ever - Slightly artificial steering feel	****
	13 CS (E46)	088 R	'05-'07	6/3246	338/7900	269/5000	1495kg	230	5.1	-	155	-	23.7	+ CSL dynamics without CSL price - Looks like the standard car	****
	13 CSL (E46)	200 R	'03-'04	6/3246	355/7900	273/4900	1385kg	260	5.3	12.0	155	-	-	+ Still superb - Changes from the automated single-clutch 'box are a bit sluggish	****
BMW N	13 (E36)	148 R	'93-'98	6/3201	321/7400	258/3250	1460kg	223	5.4	12.8	157	-	25.7	+ Performance, image - Never quite as good as the original	****
BMW N	13 (E30)	165 R	'86-'90	4/2302	212/6750	170/4600	1165kg	185	6.7	17.8	147	-	20.3	+ Best M-car ever! Race-car dynamics for the road - LHD only	****
BMW Z	4 M Coupe	097R	'06-'09	6/3246	338/7900	269/4900	1420kg	242	5.0	-	155	- 1	23.3	+ A real drivers' car - You've got to be prepared to get stuck in	****
BMW N	1 Coupe	005 R	'98-'03	6/3246	325/7400	258/3250	1375kg	240	5.1	-	155	-	25.0	+ Quick and characterful - Lacks finesse	****
BMW 6	40d	165 D	£62,295	6/2993	309/4400	465/1500	1790kg	175	5.5	-	155	144	51.4	+ Great engine and economy, excellent build - Numb steering, unsettled B-road ride	****
BMW N	16 (Mk2)	191 D	£92,340	8/4395	552/6000	501/1500	1850kg	303	4.2	-	155	232	28.5	+ Mighty ability, pace, technology - You'll want the Competition Package upgrade too	****
BMW N	16 (Mk1)	106 R	'05-'10	10/4999	500/7750	384/6100	1635kg	311	4.8	10.0	155	342	19.8	+ Awesome GT, awesome sports car - SMG gearbox now off the pace	****
BMW i8	3	210 R	£99,590	3/1499	357/5800	420/3700	1485kg	244	4.4	-	155	49	134.5	+ Brilliantly executed concept; sci-fi looks - Safe dynamic set-up	****
Chevro	let Camaro *	148 R	c£36,000	8/6162	426/5900	420/4600	1769kg	245	5.1	-	155	329	20.0	+ Looks like a Transformer made real - We'd prefer it in robot mode; now import only	***
Chevro	let Corvette Stingray Z51 (C7)	197 R	£69,810	8/6162	460/6000	465/4600	1539kg	304	4.4	9.4	180	279	23.5	+ Performance, chassis balance, supple ride - Body control could be better	****
Chevro	let Corvette Z06 (C7) *	206 R	c£88,000	8/6156	650/6400	650/3600	1598kg	413	3.2	-	186	-	-	+ Mind-boggling raw speed; surprisingly sophisticated - Edgy when really pushed	****
Ford Mi	ustang GT	202 R	£32,995	8/4951	420/6500	400/4250	1678kg	254	4.4	-	155	-	-	+ Great bang per buck, but now handles too - Ride quality may not suit UK roads	****
Ford Sh	nelby GT500 *	178 R	c£60,000	8/5812	662/6500	631/4000	1747kg	385	3.5	-	202	-	-	+ Huge performance for the money - Putting it to use takes nerve	****
Ginetta		165 R	£35,940	4/1999	175/6700	140/5000	795kg	224	5.8	-	140	-	-	+ A race-compliant sports car for the road - Feels too soft to be a hardcore track toy	****
	Integra Type R (DC2)	200 R	'96-'00	4/1797	187/8000	131/7300	1101kg	173	6.2	17.9	145	-	28.9	+ Arguably the greatest front-drive car ever - Too raw for some	****
Honda		188 R	'90-'05	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1410kg	196	5.5	-	168	-	22.8	+ 'The useable supercar' - 270bhp sounds a bit weedy today	****
Honda	NSX-R*	051R	'02-'03	6/3179	276/7300	224/5300	1270kg	221	4.4	-	168	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2002 - Honda never brought it to the UK	****
	ai Veloster Turbo	176 D	£22,000	4/1591	184/5500	195/1500	1313kg	142	8.2	-	133	157	40.9	+ The usual Hyundai value, with added fun - Styling might be too quirky for some	****
	F-type Coupe	204 D	£51,260	6/2995	335/6500	332/3500	1557kg	216	5.1	-	161	205	32.1	+ Drop-dead looks, brilliant chassis, desirability - Engine lacks top-end fight	****
	F-type S Coupe	202 R	£60,260	6/2995	375/6500	339/3500	1594kg	239	4.5	11.4	171	209	32.1	+ Exquisite style, more rewarding (and affordable) than roadster - Scrappy on the limit	****
	F-type R Coupe	203 R	£85,010	8/5000	542/6500	501/3500	1650kg	334	4.2	-	186	259	25.4	+ Looks, presence, performance, soundtrack - Bumpy and boistrous	****
Jaguar		168 R	'09-'14	8/5000	503/6000	461/2500	1678kg	305	4.6	-	155	292	23.0	+ Fast and incredibly rewarding Jag - The kids will have to stay at home	****
Jaguar		168 R	71-74	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1678kg	328	4.2	-	186	292	23.0	+ Faster and wilder than regular XKR - The F-type R Coupe	****
	XKR-S GT	193 R	'14	8/5000	542/6000	502/2500	1638kg	336	3.9	-	186	292	23.0	+ The most exciting XKR ever - Very limited numbers	****

## **POCKET** buying guide

## Lotus Elise S2

Years 2001-present Engine In-line 4-cyl, 1796cc Power 120bhp @ 5500rpm Torque 124lb ft @ 3500-4500rpm O-60mph 5.6sec Top speed 125mph (spec is for K-series model)



## WHY WOULD YOU?

Because, as with the S1, the ride and handling are the stuff of genius. The S2 is also better  $\,$ trimmed inside and more refined than the first-generation Elise, and there are a range of versions to choose from - all of them brilliant.

## WHAT TO PAY

Basic 120bhp K-series cars start at £12k. £20k will get you supercharged, 217bhp 'S'.

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

White deposits on the dipstick are a sign of head gasket failure on K-series engines; the engine  $temp\ should\ also\ stabilise\ in\ the\ mid-80s.\ The$ Toyota units are bulletproof, but check for worn synchros on supercharged cars: the second-tothird gearchange should be smooth when cold. Ensure the air con works (if fitted) as leaking pipes are common. (Full guide, evo 206.)



## **Protect yourself from the Asteriod Belt**

Generation 2 Self Healing Protection has Arrived.

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## Coupes / GTs

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	bhp/rpm	lb ft/rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	CO2 g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
Lexus RC F	206 R	£59,995	8/4969	470/6400	391/4800	1765kg	271	4.5	_	168	_	_	+ Great steering, noise, sense of occasion - Too heavy to be truly exciting	****
Lotus Exige S (V6)	209 R	£54.500	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1176kg	298	3.8	-	170	235	-	+ Breathtaking road-racer; our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Gearshift not the sweetest	****
Lotus Exige S (S2)	105 R	'06-'11	4/1796	218/7800	158/5500	930kg	238	4.5	-	148	199	33.2	+ Lightweight with a hefty punch - Uninspiring soundtrack	****
Lotus Exige (S2)	068 R	'04-'08	4/1796	189/7800	133/6800	875kg	219	4.9	-	147	-	32.1	+ Highly focused road and track tool - Lacks visual impact of S1	****
Lotus Exige (S1)	200 R	'00-'01	4/1796	192/7800	146/5000	780kg	247	4.6	-	136	-	-	+ Looks and goes like Elise racer - A tad lacking in refinement	****
Lotus Evora	138 R	£52,500	6/3456	276/6400	258/4700	1382kg	203	5.6	13.6	162	217	30.3	+ Sublime ride and handling. Our 2009 car of the year - Pricey options	****
Lotus Evora S	168 R	£63,950	6/3456	345/7000	295/4500	1430kg	245	4.6	-	172	229	28.7	+ A faster and better Evora - But one which spars with the Porsche 911	****
Maserati GranTurismo	114 R	£82,890	8/4244	399/7100	339/4750	1880kg	216	5.5	12.7	177	330	19.8	+ Striking, accomplished GT - Doesn't spike the pulse like an Aston or 911	***
Maserati GranTurismo Sport	188 R	£91,420	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1880kg	245	4.8	-	185	331	19.7	+ The best everyday GranTurismo yet - Starting to get long in the tooth	****
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	193 R	£110,740	8/4691	454/7000	383/4750	1800kg	256	4.5	-	188	360	18.2	+ Brilliant blend of road racer and GT - Gearbox takes a little getting used to	****
Maserati Crap Sport	064 R 073 R	'03-'07 '04-'07	8/4244 8/4244	390/7000 400/7000	333/4500 333/4500	1680kg 1680kg	237 239	4.8		177 180	-	17.6	+ Glorious engine, improved chassis - Overly sharp steering	****
Maserati GranSport Mazda RX-8	122 R	'03-'11	2R/1308	228/8200	156/5500	1429kg	162	6.5	16.4	146	299	24.6	+ Maser Coupe realises its full potential - Very little + Never mind the quirkiness, it's a great drive - Wafer-thin torque output	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	162 R	71-74	8/6208	451/6800	442/5000	1655kg	277	4.4	10.4	186	280	23.5	+ A proper two-door M3 rival - C63 saloon looks better	****
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series	171 R	12-13	8/6208	510/6800	457/5200	1635kg	317	4.2	-	186	286	23.3	+ The C63 turned up to 11 - Too heavy, not as fiery as Black Series cars of old	****
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG	092 D	'06-'09	8/6208	481/6800	464/5000	1755kg	278	4.6	_	155	-	19.9	+ Power, control, build quality - Lacks ultimate involvement	****
Mercedes-Benz CLK63 AMG Black Series		'07-'09	8/6208	500/6800	464/5250	1760kg	289	4.2	-	186	-	-	+ AMG goes Porsche-hunting - Dull-witted gearshift spoils the party	****
Mercedes-AMG S63 Coupe	205 D	£125,595	8/5461	577/5500	664/2250	1995kg	294	4.2	-	155	237	28.0	+ Thunderously fast S-class built for drivers - Lacks badge appeal of a Continental GT	****
Mercedes-AMG S65 Coupe	209 D	£183,075	12/5980	621/4800	737/2300	2110kg	299	4.1	-	186	279	23.7	+ Almighty power, fabulous luxury - Nearly £60k more than the S63!	****
Mercedes-AMG GT S	210 R	£110,495	8/3982	503/6250	479/1750	1570kg	326	3.8	-	193	219	30.1	+ Gorgeous to look at, fantastic chassis, huge grip - Downshifts could be quicker	****
Morgan AeroMax	120 R	'08-'09	8/4799	362/6300	370/3600	1180kg	312	4.1	-	170	-	-	+ Weird and utterly wonderful - Only 100 were made	****
Nissan 370Z	204 R	£27,445	6/3696	323/7000	268/5200	1496kg	219	5.3	-	155	248	26.7	+ Quicker, leaner, keener than 350Z - Not quite a Cayman-killer	****
Nissan 370Z Nismo	209 R	£37,585	6/3696	339/7400	274/5200	1496kg	230	5.2	-	155	248	26.6	+ Sharper looks, improved ride, extra thrills - Engine lacks sparkle	****
Nissan 350Z	107R	'03-'09	6/3498	309/6800	264/4800	1532kg	205	5.5	13.0	155	-	24.1	+ Huge fun, and great value too - Honestly, we're struggling	****
Nissan GT-R (2012MY/2013MY/2014MY)	210 R	£78,020	6/3799	542/6400	466/3200	1740kg	316	3.2	7.5	196	275	24.0	+ GT-R is quicker and better than ever - But costs over £20K more than its launch price	****
Nissan GT-R Nismo	199 R	£125,000	6/3799	592/6800	481/3200	1720kg	350	2.6	-	196	275	24.0	+ Manages to make regular GT-R feel imprecise - Compromised by super-firm suspension	
Nissan GT-R (2010MY)	152 R	'10-'12	6/3799	523/6400	451/3200	1740kg	305	3.0	-	194	279	23.5	+ More powerful version of the original - But they're not worlds apart to drive	****
Nissan GT-R (2008MY) Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)	125 R 196R	'08-'10 '99-'02	6/3799 6/2568	473/6400 276/7000	434/3200 289/4400	1740kg 1560kg	276 180	3.8 <b>4.7</b>	12.5	193 165	-	20.1	+ Our 2008 Car of the Year, now from just £35K - You won't see 20mpg often + Big, brutal, and great fun - Needs more than the standard 276bhp	****
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R33)	196 R	'97-'99	6/2568	276/6800	271/4400	1540kg	182	5.4	14.3	155	-	22.0	+ Proof that Japanese hi-tech can work (superbly) - Limited supply	****
Noble M12 GTO-3R	200 R	'03-'06	6/2968	352/6200	350/3500	1080kg	332	3.8	-	170		22.0	+ The ability to humble exotica - Notchy gearchange can spoil the flow	****
Peugeot RCZ 1.6 THP 200	155 R	£27.150	4/1598	197/5500	202/1700	1421kg	141	7.3	18.1	147	155	42.1	+ Distinctive looks, highly capable handling - Could be a bit more exciting	****
Peugeot RCZ R	209 R	£32,250	4/1598	266/6000	243/1900	1280kg	211	5.9	-	155	145	44.8	+ Rewarding and highly effective when fully lit - Dated cabin, steering lacks feel	****
Porsche Cayman (981)	209 R	£39,694	6/2706	271/7400	214/4500	1330kg	207	5.7	-	165	195	33.6	+ Very enticing for the money in basic spec - You might still want the power of the 'S'	****
Porsche Cayman S (981)	202 R	£48,783	6/3436	321/7400	273/4500	1320kg	247	4.5	10.5	175	206	32.1	+ The Cayman comes of age - Erm	****
Porsche Cayman GTS (981)	203 R	£55,397	6/3436	335/7400	280/4750	1345kg	253	4.9	-	177	211	31.4	+ Tweaks improve an already sublime package - Slightly 'aftermarket' looks	****
Porsche Cayman GT4 (981)	208 R	£64,451	6/3800	380/7400	310/4750	1340kg	288	4.4	-	183	238	27.4	+ The Cayman we've been waiting for - Waiting lists	****
Porsche Cayman (987)	131 R	'11-'13	6/2893	261/7200	221/4400	1330kg	199	5.8	-	165	221	30.1	+ Extra power, just as involving - Still lacks the desirability of other Porsches	****
Porsche Cayman S (987)	132 R	'06-'13	6/3436	316/7200	273/4750	1350kg	237	5.2	-	172	223	29.7	+ Still want that 911? - Yeah, us too	****
Porsche Cayman R (987)	158 R	'11-'13	6/3436	325/7400	273/4750	1295kg	255	4.7	-	175	228	29.1	+ Total handling excellence - Styling additions not to all tastes	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (991)	199 R	£73,509	6/3436	345/7400	288/5600	1400kg	250	4.8		179	211	31.4	+ 911 becomes cleaner and cleverer - But some of its character's gone AWOL	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (991)	201 R	£83,545	6/3800	394/7400	324/5600	1415kg	283	4.3	9.5	188	223	29.7	+ As above, but with supercar pace - Electric steering robs it of some tactility	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4S (991) Porsche 911 Carrera GTS (991)	179 R 204 R	£88,400 £91,098	6/3800 6/3800	394/7400 424/7500	324/5600 324/5750	1465kg 1425kg	273 302	4.5	-	185 190	233	28.5	+ More satisfying than RWD 991 Carreras - Choose your spec carefully + The best RWD 991 Carrera - Optional active anti-roll bars rob feedback	****
Porsche 911 Carrera 4 GTS (991)	204 R	£95,862	6/3800	424/7500	324/5750	1470kg	293	4.4	-	189	233	28.5	+ The highlight of the 991 Carrera line-up - Pricey for a Carrera	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.2)	121 R	'08-'11	6/3800	380/6500	310/4400	1425kg	271	4.4	-	188	242	27.4	+ Poise, precision, blinding pace - Feels a bit clinical	****
Porsche 911 Carrera S (997.1)	070 R	'04-'08	6/3824	350/6600	295/4600	1420kg	246	4.6	10.9	182	-	24.5	+ evo Car of the Year 2004; like a junior GT3 - Tech overload?	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (996 3.4)	008 R	'98-'01	6/3387	296/6800	258/4600	1320kg	228	5.2	-	174	-	28.0	+ evo Car of the Year 1998; beautifully polished - Some like a bit of rough	****
Porsche 911 Carrera (993)		'94-'97	6/3600	285/6100	251/5250	1372kg	211	5.2	-	168	-	25.0	+ More character than 996 - Harder work at speed	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (991)	206 R	£100,540	6/3799	468/8250	324/6250	1430kg	333	3.5	-	196	289	23.0	+ evo Car of the Year 2013 - At its best at licence-troubling speeds	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.2)	182 R	'09-'11	6/3797	429/7600	317/6250	1395kg	312	4.2	9.2	194	303	22.1	+ Even better than the car it replaced - Give us a minute	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (3.8, 997.2)	200 R	'10-'11	6/3797	444/7900	317/6750	1370kg	329	4.0	-	193	314	-	+ Our favourite car from the first 200 issues of evo - For people like us, nothing	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS 4.0 (997.2)	187 R	'11-'12	6/3996	493/8250	339/5750	1360kg	368	3.8	-	193	326	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2011 - Unforgiving on-road ride; crazy used prices	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (997.1)	182 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1395kg	298	4.3	9.4	192	-	-	+ Runner-up evo Car of the Year 2006 - Ferrari 599 GTBs	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (997.1)	105 R	'07-'09	6/3600	409/7600	298/5500	1375kg	302	4.2	-	193	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2007 - A chunk more money than the brilliant GT3	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.2)	082 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1380kg	272	4.3	9.2	190	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2003 - Chassis is a bit too track-focused for some roads	****
Porsche 911 GT3 RS (996.2)	068 R	'03-'05	6/3600	375/7400	284/5000	1330kg	286	4.2	9.2	190	-	-	+ Track-biased version of above - Limited supply	****
Porsche 911 GT3 (996.1)	182 R	'99	6/3600	360/7200	273/5000	1350kg	271	4.5	10.3	187	-	21.9	+ evo Car of the Year 1999 - Porsche didn't build enough	****
Rolls-Royce Wraith	205 D	£229,128	12/6592	624/5600	590/1500	2360kg	260	4.6	-	155	327	20.2	+ Refinement, chassis, drivetrain - Shared componentry lets cabin down	****
Subaru BRZ	204 R	£22,495	4/1998	197/7000	151/6400	1230kg	163	7.6	-	140	181	36.2	+ Fine chassis, great steering - Weak engine, not the slide-happy car they promised	****
Toyota GT86	174 R 097 R	£22,995 '05-'07	4/1998 6/3996	197/7000	151/6400 349/5000	1275kg	157	7.6 3.7	-	140 185	181	36.2	+ More fun than its cousin (above) - Same lack of torque, poor interior quality	****
TVR Sagaris TVR Tuscan S (Mk2)		'05-'07	6/3996	406/7500 400/7000	349/5000	1078kg 1100kg	383 369	4.0	-	185	-	-	+ Looks outrageous - 406bhp feels a touch optimistic  + Possibly TVP's host ever car. Accodynamic 'ophascoments'	****
TVR Cerbera Speed Six	076 R 004 R	'98-'04	6/3996	350/6800	330/5000		315	<b>5.0</b>	11.4	160+	_	-	+ Possibly TVR's best ever car - Aerodynamic 'enhancements' + Accomplished and desirable - Check chassis for corrosion	****
VW Scirocco GT 2.0 TSI	155 R	£26.125	4/1984	217/4500	258/1500	1130kg 1369kg	158	6.5	11.4	153	139	47.1	+ Accomplished and desirable - Check Chassis for Corrosion + Golf GTI price and performance - Interior lacks flair	****
1 11 JUNIOCCO WI Z.U I JI	200 D	£32,580	4/1984	276/6000	258/2500	1426kg	187	5.7	_	155	187	35.3	+ Great engine, grown-up dynamics - Perhaps a little too grown-up for some	****



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Our Choice Ferrari 458 Speciale. The regular 458 Italia is amazing enough, but the Speciale follows in the tradition of the 360 Challenge Stradale and 430 Scuderia and makes the car it is based on even more, well, special. Our 2014 Car of the Year. It's equally brilliant in open-top 'Speciale A' form, too.



**Best of the Rest**Porsche's 918 Spyder (left) pips the McLaren P1 on the road, and vice versa on the track. The LaFerrari is an incredible drive, too. If you can stretch to it, maybe get all three... Meanwhile, Pagani's Huayra was our joint 2012 Car of the Year and Lamborghini's Aventador offers true supercar drama.

## Supercars

Car	Issue no.	Price	Engine cyl/cc	php/rpm	lb ft./rpm	Weight	bhp/ton	0-60mph	0-100mph	Max mph	C02 g/km	EC mpg	<b>evo</b> rating	
9ff GT9R	127 D	c£450,000	6/4000	1120/7850	774/5970	1346kg	845	2.9		260		-	+ Above 100mph eats Veyrons for breakfast - Eats M3 dust at traffic lights	****
Aston Martin Vanquish (Mk2)	203 R	£192,995	12/5935	568/6650	465/5500	1739kg	332	3.6	-	201	298	22.1	+ Much better than the DBS it succeeds, especially in 2015MY form - It's no Ferrari F12	****
Aston Martin Vanquish S (Mk1)	110 R	'05-'07	12/5935	520/7000	425/5800	1875kg	282	4.9	10.1	200	-	-	+ Vanquish joins supercar greats - A tad intimidating at the limit	****
Aston Martin One-77 Bugatti Veyron 16.4	179 R 134 R	'10-'12 '05-'11	12/7312 16/7993	750/6000 1000/6000	553/7600 922/2200	1740kg 1950kg	438 521	3.7 <b>2.8</b>	5.8	220+ 253	- 596	11.4	+ The engine, the looks, the drama - Gearbox hates manoeuvring; only 77 were made + Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - Er, lacks luggage space?	****
Bugatti Veyron Super Sport	151 R	70-74	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1838kg	654	2.5	-	268	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest supercar - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	****
Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport Vitesse	185 R	73-74	16/7993	1183/6400	1106/3000	1990kg	604	2.6	-	254	539	12.2	+ The world's fastest convertible - Limited to 258mph for us mere mortals	****
Bugatti EB110	078 R	'91-'95	12/3500	552/8000	451/3750	1566kg	358	3.4	-	212	-	-	+ Superbly engineered 4WD quad-turbo rocket - It just fizzled out	****
Caparo T1	138 R	£301,975	8/3499	575/10,500	310/9000	689kg	848	3.8	6.2	205	-	-	+ Absolutely staggering performance - Absolutely staggering price tag	****
Chevrolet Corvette ZR1 Ferrari 458 Italia	133 R 183 R	'09-'13 £178,551	8/6162 8/4497	638/6500 562/9000	603/3800 398/6000	1528kg 1485kg	424 384	3.8 3.2	7.6 6.8	<i>205</i> 202	355 307	18.8 20.6	+ Huge pace and character - Take plenty of brave pills if there's rain + An astounding achievement, looks fantastic - There'll never be a manual	****
Ferrari 458 Spider	185 R	£198,996	8/4497	562/9000	398/6000	1530kg	373	3.3	-	198	275	23.9	+ A 458 that sounds and feels more organic - Er, 4mph slower than the Italia?	****
Ferrari 458 Speciale	203 R	£208,090	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1395kg	435	3.0	-	202+	275	23.9	+ evo Car of the Year 2014 - If you don't own a regular 458, nothing	****
Ferrari 458 Speciale A	204 D	£228,682	8/4497	597/9000	398/6000	1445kg	420	3.0	-	199	275	21.2	+ Same dynamics as the coupe but less shouty - Some chassis flex on bumpy surfaces	****
Ferrari F430	163 R	'04-'10	8/4308	483/8500	343/5250	1449kg	339	4.0		196	-	18.6	+ Just brilliant - Didn't you read the plus point?	****
Ferrari 430 Scuderia Ferrari Scuderia Spider 16M	121 R 133 D	'07-'10 '09	8/4308 8/4308	503/8500 503/8500	347/5250 347/5250	1350kg 1440kg	378 355	<b>3.5</b> 3.7	7.7	198 196	360	15.7 18.0	+ Successful F1 technology transplant - Likes to shout about it + A hardcore soft-top Ferrari - Earplugs recommended	****
Ferrari 360 Modena	163 R	'99-'04	8/3586	394/8500	275/4750	1390kg	288	4.5	9.0	183	-	17.0	+ Worthy successor to 355 - Not quite as involving as it should be	****
Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradale	068 R	'03-'04	8/3586	420/8500	275/4750	1280kg	333	4.1	-	186	-	-	+ Totally exhilarating road-racer. It's loud - It's very, very loud	****
Ferrari F355 F1 Berlinetta	163 R	'97-'99	8/3496	374/8250	268/6000	1350kg	281	4.7	-	183	-	16.7	+ Looks terrific, sounds even better - Are you kidding?	****
Ferrari F12 Berlinetta	190 R	£240,083	12/6262	730/8250	509/6000	1630kg	455	3.1	-	211	350	18.8	+ 730bhp isn't too much power for the road - Super-quick steering is an acquired taste	****
Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano Ferrari 599 GTO	101 R 161 R	'06-'12 '11-'12	12/5999 12/5999	611/7600 661/8250	448/5600 457/6500	1688kg 1605kg	368 418	<b>3.5</b> 3.4	7.4	205 208	415	15.8	+ evo Car of the Year 2006 - Banks are getting harder to rob + One of the truly great Ferraris - Erm, the air con isn't very good	****
Ferrari 575M Fiorano Handling Pack	200 R	'02-'06	12/5748	508/7250	434/5250	1730kg	298	4.2	9.6	202	-	12.3	+ Fiorano pack makes 575 truly great - It should have been standard	****
Ferrari 550 Maranello	169 R	'97-'02	12/5474	485/7000	415/5000	1716kg	287	4.3	10.0	199	-	12.3	+ Everything - Nothing	****
Ferrari FF	194 R	£227,168	12/6262	651/8000	504/6000	1880kg	347	3.7	-	208	360	15.4	+ Four seats and 4WD, but a proper Ferrari - Looks divide opinion	****
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti F1	090 R	'04-'11	12/5748	533/7250	434/5250	1840kg	294	4.3	9.8	199	470	13.8	+ Awesomely capable grand tourer - See above	****
Ferrari LaFerrari Ferrari Enzo	203 R 203 R	c£1m '02-'04	12/6262 12/5999	950/9000 651/7800	664/6750 485/5500	1255kg 1365kg	769 485	3.0 <b>3.5</b>	6.7	217+ 217+	330 545	-	+ Perhaps the greatest Ferrari ever - Brakes lack a touch of precision on track + Intoxicating, exploitable - Cabin detailing falls short of a Zonda or F1's	****
Ferrari F50	186 R	'96-'97	12/4699	513/8500	347/6500	1230kg	424	3.9	-	202	-		+ A better drivers' Ferrari than the 288, F40 or Enzo - Not better looking, though	****
Ferrari F40	199 R	'87-'92	8/2936	471/7000	426/4000	1100kg	437	4.1	-	201	-	-	+ Brutally fast - It's in the dictionary under 'turbo lag'	****
Ferrari 288 GTO	064 R	'84-'85	8/2855	394/7000	366/3800	1160kg	345	4.9	-	189	-	-	+ Painfully beautiful, rarer than the F40 - You are joking?	****
Ford GT	200 R	'04-'06	8/5409	550/6500	500/3750	1583kg	353	3.7	-	205	-	-	+ Our 2005 Car of the Year - Don't scalp yourself getting in	****
Gumpert Apollo Hennessey Venom GT	110 R 180 R	£275,000 £900,000	8/4163 8/7000	690/6300 1244/6500	675/4000 1155/4000	1200kg 1244kg	584 1016	3.0 2.5	-	220+ 270	-	-	+ Stupendous perfomance, 'Apollo' - High price, 'Gumpert' + 0-200mph in 14.5sec, and it handles too - Looks like an Exige	****
Jaguar XJ220	157 R	'92-'94	6/3498	542/7200	475/4500	1470kg	375	3.7	-	213	-	-	+ Britain's greatest supercaruntil McLaren built the F1	****
Koenigsegg Agera R	180 R	c£1.09m	8/5032	1124/7100	885/2700	1435kg	796	2.8	-	273	-	-	+ As fast and exciting as your body can handle - It's Veyron money	****
Koenigsegg One:1	202 R	c£2.0m	8/5065	1341/7500	1011/6000	1360kg	1002	2.9	-	273	-	-	+ The most powerful car we've ever tested - It's sold out; we couldn't afford one anyway	****
Koenigsegg CCX	094 R	'06-'10	8/4700	806/6900	678/5700	1180kg	694	3.9	7.7	245+	-	-	+ Sweden's greatest supercar - Sweden's only supercar	****
Koenigsegg CCXR Edition Lamborghini Huracán LP610-4	118 R 209 D	'08-'10 £186,760	8/4800 10/5204	1004/7000 602/8250	796/5600 413/6500	1280kg 1532kg	797 399	2.8 3.2	-	250+ 202+	290	22.6	+ One of the world's fastest cars - Spikey power delivery + Defies the numbers; incredible point-to-point pace - Takes work to find its sweet-spot	****
Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4	180 D	'08-'13	10/5204	552/8000	398/6500	1410kg	398	3.7		202+	325	16.0	+ Still a missile from A to B - Starting to show its age	****
Lamborghini LP570-4 Superleggera	152 R	10-13	10/5204	562/8000	398/6500	1340kg	426	3.5	-	202	325	20.6	+ Less weight and more power than original Superleggera - LP560-4 runs it very close	****
Lamborghini Gallardo	094 R	'06-'08	10/4961	513/8000	376/4250	1520kg	343	4.3	9.4	196	-	-	+ On a full-bore start it spins all four wheels. Cool - Slightly clunky e-gear	****
Lamborghini Gallardo Superleggera	104 R	'07-'08	10/4961	522/8000	376/4250	1420kg	373	3.8	-	196	-	-	+ Lighter, more agile - Grabby carbon brakes, clunky e-gear	****
Lamborghini Aventador LP700-4 Lamborghini Aventador Roadster	194 R 184 R	£260,040 £288,840	12/6498 12/6498	690/8250 690/8250	509/5500 509/5500	1575kg 1625kg	445 431	2.9	-	217 217	370 370	17.7 17.7	+ Most important new Lambo since the Countach - Erm expensive? + Sensational engine and styling - A wee bit on the thirsty side	****
Lamborghini Murciélago	089 D	'01-'06	12/6192	570/7500	479/5400	1650kg	351	4.0	-	205	-	-	+ Gorgeous, capable and incredibly friendly - V12 feels stressed	****
Lamborghini Murciélago LP640	093 R	'06-'11	12/6496	631/8000	487/6000	1665kg	385	3.3	-	211	-	21.3	+ Compelling old-school supercar - You'd better be on your toes	****
Lamborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	200 R	'09-'11	12/6496	661/8000	487/6500	1565kg	429	3.2	7.3	212	-	-	+ A supercar in its truest, wildest sense - Be prepared for stares	****
Lamborghini Diablo 6.0	019 R	'00-'02	12/5992	550/7100	457/5500	1625kg	343	3.8	-	200+	-	-	+ Best-built, best-looking Diablo of all - People's perceptions	****
Lexus LFA/LFA Nürburgring Maserati MC12	200 R 079 R	'10-'12 '04-'05	10/4805 12/5998	552/8700 621/7500	354/6800 481/5500	1480kg 1445kg	379 437	3.7 3.8	-	202 205	-	-	+ Absurd and compelling supercar - Badge and price don't quite match + Rarer than an Enzo - The Ferrari's better	***** ****
McLaren 650S	196 R	£195,250	8/3799	641/7250	500/6000	1428kg	456	3.0	-	207	275	24.2	+ Better brakes, balance and looks than 12C; more power too - Costs an extra £19k	****
McLaren 12C	187 R	71-74	8/3799	616/7500	442/3000	1434kg	435	3.1	-	207	279	24.2	+ Staggering performance, refinement - Engine noise can be grating	****
McLaren P1	205 R	£866,000	8/3799	903/7500	664/4000	1395kg	658	2.8	-	217	194	34.0	+ Freakish breadth of ability - At its mind-bending best on track	****
McLaren F1	205 R	'94-'98	12/6064	627/7500	479/4000	1137kg	560	3.2	6.3	240+	-	19.0	+ Still the most single-minded supercar ever - There'll never be another	****
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG Black Series	131 R	'09-'10	12/5980	661/5400	737/2200	1876kg	358	4.0	8.1	199	200	21 /	+ Bonkers looks, bonkers speed - Bonkers £250K price + Great engine and chassis (gullwing doors too!) - Slightly tardy gearbox	****
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG Black Series	159 R 204 R	£165,030 £229,985	8/6208 8/6208	563/6800 622/7400	479/4750 468/5500	1620kg 1550kg	335 408	3.6	8.4	197 196	308 321	21.4	+ Stunning engine, superb body control - Be careful on less-than-smooth roads	****
Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren	073 R	'04-'07	8/5439	617/6500	575/3250	1693kg	370	3.7	-	208	-	-	+ Zonda-pace, 575-style drivability - Dreadful brake feel	****
Noble M600	186 R	c£200,000	8/4439	650/6800	604/3800	1198kg	551	3.8	7.7	225	-	-	+ Spiritual successor to the Ferrari F40 - It's a bit pricey	****
Pagani Huayra	185 R	c£1m	12/5980	720/5800	737/2250	1350kg	542	3.3	-	224	-	-	+ Our joint 2012 Car of the Year - Engine isn't as nape-prickling as the Zonda's	****
Pagani Zonda 760RS	170 R	£1.5m	12/7291	750/6300	575/4500	1210kg	630	3.3 3.6	-	217+ <b>197</b>	-	-	+ One of the most extreme Zondas ever - One of the last Zondas ever (probably)	****
Pagani Zonda S 7.3 Pagani Zonda F	096 R 186 R	'02-'05 '05-'06	12/7291 12/7291	555/5900 602/6150	553/4050 575/4000	1250kg 1230kg	451 497	3.6	-	214	-	-	+ evo Car of the Year 2001 (in earlier 7.0 form) - Values have gone up a fair bit since then + Everything an Italian supercar ought to be - Looks a bit blingy next to a Carrera GT	****
Pagani Zonda Cinque Roadster	147 D	'09-'10	12/7291	669/6200	575/4000	1400kg	485		-	217+	-	-	+ The best Zonda ever - Doesn't come up in the classifieds often	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (991)	210 R	£120,598	6/3800	513/6000	524/2100	1595kg	327	3.4	-	195	227	29.1	+ Incredible pace, whatever the weather - More involvement wouldn't go amiss	****
Porsche 911 Turbo S (991)	188 R	£142,120	6/3800	552/6500	553/2200	1605kg	349	3.1	-	197	227	29.1	+ Still unrivalled as an everyday supercar - At times disguises the thrills it can offer	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (997.2)	140 R 204 R	'09-'13 '10-'13	6/3800 6/3600	493/6000 611/6500	479/1950	1570kg	319 453	<b>3.2</b> 3.5	7.3	193 205	272 284	24.4	+ The Turbo at the very top of its game - The GT3's cheaper + More powerful than a Carrera GT. Handles, too - Erm	****
Porsche 911 GT2 RS (997.2) Porsche 911 Turbo (997.1)	204 R 094 R	10-13	6/3600	472/6000	516/2250 457/1950	1370kg 1585kg	303		8.7	193	284	22.1	+ More powerful than a Carrera G. Handles, too - Erm + Monster cornering ability - A bit woolly on its standard settings	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (996)	017 R	'00-'06	6/3600	414/6000	437/1930	1540kg	273	4.1	10.0	189	-	21.0	+ evo Car of the year 2000; the 911 for all seasons - We can't find any reasons	****
Porsche 911 GT2 (996)	072 R	'04-'06	6/3600	475/5700	457/3500	1420kg	339	4.0	-	198	-	-	+ Later revisions made it even more of a star - Care still required	****
Porsche 911 Turbo (993)	066 R	'95-'98	6/3600	408/5750	398/4500	1500kg	276	3.7	-	180	-	19.4	+ Stupendous all-weather supercar - It doesn't rain enough	****
Porsche 911 GT2 (993)	003 R	'96-'99	6/3600	430/5700	398/4500	1295kg	337	3.9	-	184	- 70	-	+ Hairy-arsed homologation special - Only 57 were made	****
Porsche 918 Spyder Porsche Carrera GT	200 R 200 R	£781,155 '04-'06	8/4593 10/5733	875/8500 604/8000	944/6600 <i>435/5750</i>	1674kg 1380kg	531 445	2.6 <b>3.8</b>	7.6	211 205	79	85.6	+ Blistering performance; cohesive hybrid tech - Added weight and complexity + Still feels ahead of its time - Needs modern tyres to tame its spikiness	****
Porsche 959	192 R	'87-'90	6/2850	444/6500	369/5000	1450kg	311	3.7	7.0	197	-	-	+ Tech showcase, still a great drive - Limited choice of colours?	****
Ruf Rt 12	097 R	c£155,000	6/3746	641/7000	641/3500	1530kg	426	3.3	-	219	-	-	+ Beautifully executed car with truly immense power - Needs care	****
Ruf CTR3	126 R	c£357,000	6/3746	691/7600	656/4000	1400kg	501	3.2	-	235	-	-	+ The best 911 that Porsche never made - But not the best looking	****
Ruf CTR 'Yellowbird'	097R	'87-'89	6/3366	469/5950	408/5100	1170kg	345	4.1	-	211	-	-	+ A true legend - We can't all drive like Stefan Roser	****

## Track Times



Car	Lap time 1:13.6	Peak mph 127.8	issue no.	Condition
Radical SR8LM (fastest car) Caparo T1 (fastest supercar)	1:14.8	130.9	131	Dry Dry
Ferrari 458 Italia	1:19.3	120.0	159	Dry
Gumpert Apollo S	1:19.4	120.4	119	Dry
McLaren MP4-12C (Corsa tyres)	1:19.6	121.2	159	Dry
Caterham Levante V8	1:19.6	118.6	131	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2 RS	1:19.9	122.3	158	Dry
otus 2-Eleven GT4	1:20.1	113.2	138	Dry
Caterham Superlight R500	1:20.2	115.7	119	Dry
AcLaren MP4-12C	1:20.6	120.9	159	Dry
loble M600	1:20.8	121.8	159	Dry
Porsche 997 GT3 RS 4.0 (fastest coupe)	1:21.0	118.2	160	Dry
amborghini Murciélago LP670-4 SV	1:21.3	121.1	134	Dry
Ariel Atom 3 Supercharged	1:21.5	113.6	119	Dry
(TM X-Bow (300bhp)	1:21.5	112.7	138	Dry
errari 430 Scuderia	1:21.7	117.2	121	Dry
orsche 997.2 GT3 RS (3.8)	1:21.9	116.8	150	Dry
amborghini Gallardo LP560-4	1:22.5	119.1	122	Dry
Brooke Double R	1:22.5	113.2	119	Dry
amborghini Murciélago LP640	1:22.9	116.7	143	Dry
Porsche Carrera GT	1:23.3	115.2	119	Dry
Porsche 997.2 GT3	1:23.3	114.5	138	Dry
Porsche 997 Turbo S	1:23.5	117.5	146	Dry
Porsche 997 GT2	1:23.5	115.1	119	Dry
lissan GT-R (2008MY)	1:23.6	113.1	119	Dry
Porsche 991 Carrera	1:23.6	112.5	182	Dry
Porsche 991 Carrera Cabriolet	1:23.9	112.3	183	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SL63 AMG	1:23.9	-	YouTube	Dry
Porsche 997 Turbo	1:24.1	113.5	136	Damp
otus 340R (190bhp)	1:24.2	110.0	135	Dry
Porsche Boxster S (981)	1:24.2	109.3	183	Dry
Caterham Superlight R300	1:24.3	101.5	138	Dry
Maserati GranTurismo MC Stradale	1:24.5	115.1	160	Dry
Porsche Cayman S (981)	1:24.5	109.2	202	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG	1:24.6	115.7	146	Dry
Porsche Boxster Spyder (987)	1:24.7	107.7	167	Dry
Caterham 7 Supersport	1:24.8	101.6	YouTube	Dry
Ferrari California	1:25.0	111.8	134	Dry
CTM X-Bow	1:25.0	105.0	123	Dry
BMW E92 M3 Coupe	1:25.1	109.1	162	Dry
Mercedes-Benz SL65 AMG Black	1:25.2	108.6	131	Dry
Jaguar F-type V8 S	1:25.2	111.2	183	Dry
Audi RS5	1:25.4	108.8	162	Dry
Audi R8 Spyder V8	1:25.5	107.0	167	Dry
Porsche Cayman R	1:25.5	106.8	158	Dry
Aston Martin V8 Vantage Roadster	1:25.6	109.1	183	Dry
BMW M5 (F10) (fastest saloon)	1:25.7	112.0	165	Dry
Jaguar XKR-S	1:25.7	-	YouTube	Dry
Aston Martin V12 Vantage	1:25.8	110.9	146	Dry
Mitsubishi Evo X FQ-400	1:25.9	107.5	138	Dry
BMW 1-series M Coupe	1:25.9	106.4	158	Dry
Mitsubishi Evo X RS 360	1:26.1	106.6	153	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Trophy (fastest hot hatch)	1:26.1	105.3	166	Dry
laguar F-type S Coupe	1:26.2	106.3	202	Dry
Audi TT RS	1:26.3	107.2	149	Dry
Aston Martin DBS	1:26.4	109.5	143	Dry
Porsche Panamera Turbo	1:26.5	109.2	137	Dry
Audi RS6 Avant (C7) (fastest estate)	1:26.5	-	YouTube	Dry
BMW M135i	1:26.6		YouTube	Dry
laguar XJ220	1:26.7	111.7	131	Dry
Porsche Cayenne Turbo S (fastest 4x4)	1:26.8	106.1	YouTube	Dry
Mercedes-Benz E63 AMG	1:26.8	104.9	165	Dry
Porsche Cayenne Turbo	1:26.9	107.4	158	Dry
Mercedes-Benz GLA45 AMG	1:26.9	-	205	Dry
Lotus Evora	1:27.1	104.2	145	Dry
Nissan 370Z	1:27.1	104.2	158	Dry
laguar F-type V6 S	1:27.2	105.0	YouTube	Dry
Porsche Panamera S	1:27.3	102.4	165	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane 265 Cup	1:27.3	-	YouTube	Dry
Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Coupe	1:27.7	111.0	162	Dry
Lotus Elise SC	1:27.7	104.6	131	Dry
Audi S3	1:27.7	-	YouTube	Dry
/auxhall VXR8 Bathurst S	1:27.8	106.1	131	Dry
BMW E46 M3 CSL	1:27.8	105.4	153	Dry
Renaultsport Mégane R26.R	1:27.8	103.4	-	-
Audi RS6 Avant (C6) (fastest estate)	1:27.9	111.0	121	Dry
laguar XFR	1:27.9	108.1	137	Dry
SEAT Leon Cupra 280	1:28.0	-	YouTube	Dry
Lexus IS-F	1:28.1	106.4	151	Dry
Porsche Boxster S (987)	1:28.1	105.4	120	Dry
Subaru WRX STI	1:28.3	101.6	157	Dry
	1:28.3	-	205	Dry
		102.4	162	Dry
Porsche Macan S			IU/	DI y
Porsche Macan S SEAT Leon Cupra R	1:28.7			Dry
Porsche Macan S SEAT Leon Cupra R Bentley Continental Supersports	1:28.7 1:29.2	105.8	149	Dry
Porsche Macan S SEAT Leon Cupra R Bentley Continental Supersports Lotus Elise Club Racer	1:28.7 1:29.2 1:29.2	105.8 95.5	149 162	Dry
	1:28.7 1:29.2	105.8	149	



■ Location Bedford Autodrome
■ Length 1.85 miles (2.98 kilometres)
■ Direction Anti-clockwise

**Note:** West Circuit reconfigured in May 2015. The above times are from before this date. Newer times are not comparable.





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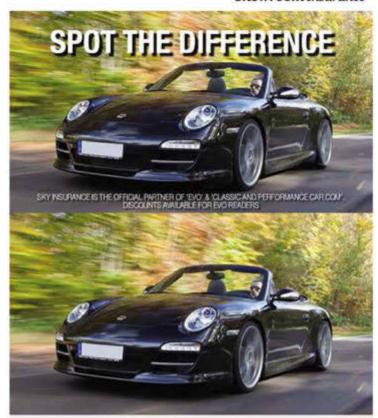
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## Renaultsport Mégane R26.R polycarbonate windows

by RICHARD LANE | PHOTOGRAPHY by DAVID SHEPHERD

ONE IMAGINES JEAN-PASCAL DAUCE, DISMAYED AT having had his request to give the forthcoming phase two Renaultsport Mégane R26 a power hike curiously denied, felt a lump form in his throat. After all, it being 2007, his counterpart at Ford – none other than Jost Capito – was in the process of arming a new Focus RS with a reported 300bhp and a chassis capable of handling it...

In hindsight, the man behind any Mégane worth driving had sound grounds on which to ask the Groupe Renault board for a right of reply, because at a time when the hot hatch power wars were threatening to go nuclear, the R26's existing 227bhp wasn't going to be enough to carry the new car. What that seemingly apathetic rejection forced Dauce and his engineers to do, however, will go down in automotive legend.

At 1345kg, the R26 was not a particularly heavy car and had even been described in these very pages as 'the *ultimate* hardcore fast hatch', yet after Dauce's men stripped it down to a carcass and replaced what they couldn't remove with lighter alternatives, what was left was the R26.R.

There must have been an whiff of mania during product planning meetings for the R26.R – amusingly, Dauce later admitted that things did

in fact get a bit out of hand – because out went the rear seats, passenger and curtain airbags, climate control, rear-window and headlamp washers, and the radio and CD player. With any pretence of practicality laughed aside, there was also a ruthless cleansing of soundproofing materials. Of what remained, the seats were exchanged for carbon-shelled Sabelt pieces with six-point harnesses and aluminium bases and the bonnet was swapped for a carbon piece that itself was an objet d'art. A roll-cage and titanium exhaust also featured, if so optioned.

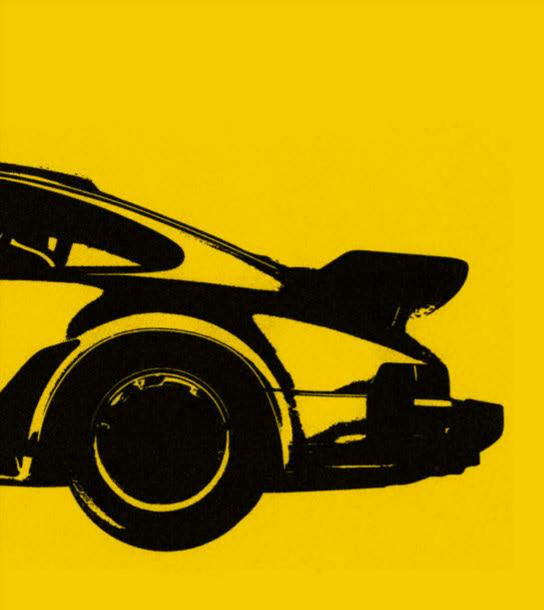
Overall, 123kg evaporated and the car's all-important power-to-weight ratio rose from 171 to 189bhp/ton – the equivalent of giving the original R26 a robust and very competitive 250bhp.

One detail illustrates the R26.R's motorsport-inspired madness better than any other, though: polycarbonate rear and rear side windows. Renaultsport saved 5.7kg by ditching glass and it's this deliciously melodramatic detail everyone remembers. One window also bears a graphic celebrating test driver Vincent Baylé's committed 8min 17sec Nürburgring effort. Perhaps easier to appreciate, however, is that this 911 GT3 RS-lite went on to lap the West Circuit at Bedford Autodrome in the same time as a BMW M3 CSL, a fact that's still hard to comprehend.

## **evo** NEXT MONTH Mazda MX-5 first drive

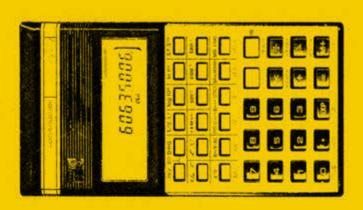
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Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown is a Leon ST CUPRA 280 with optional Sub8 Performance Pack, CUPRA Black-Line and Nevada white metallic paint.

Official fuel consumption for the SEAT Leon ST CUPRA in mpg (litres per 100km); urban 32.1 (8.8) - 33.6 (8.4); extra-urban 50.4 (5.6) - 49.6 (6.6); combined 42.2 (6.7) - 42.8 (6.6).  $CO_2$  emissions 157 - 154 g/km.